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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

OCTOBER 2010 £3·95

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PAGE 9

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CAROL KLEIN
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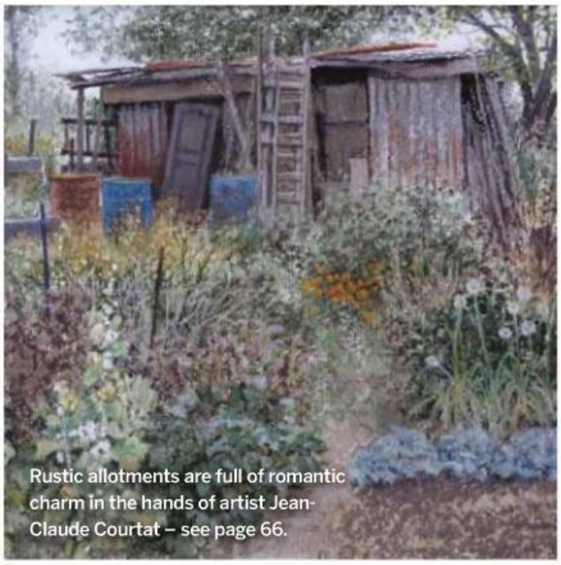
editor's letter

Over the eight or so years I've worked on the magazine, I've noticed a steady increase in the number of stunning autumn gardens that are suggested to us by photographers and writers. The feature on a private garden in Shropshire (page 30) is a perfect example. And it's not just the chocolately browns, fiery reds and oranges that make it so delicious, but the wonderful array of late-flowering perennials and carefully put-together compositions that keep the interest high. Nerines are some of the brightest blooms at this time of year, and their lipstick-pink flowers are enough to dispel any thoughts of winter gloom. On page 46 Carol Klein reveals which new varieties to look out for. Carol also explains how to recreate her favourite seasonal plant combination at Glebe Cottage, her home in Devon (page 56). In addition, we give a step-by-step guide to some pretty autumn decorations (page 42) and meet the French artist Jean-Claude Courtat, who uses pastels to capture the quiet charm of allotments (page 66). Finally, we look at the key players in the 'new perennial' movement and assess the influence they've had on today's planting styles (page 76). I can't help wondering if they are the driving forces behind the increase in lovely late-season gardens mentioned earlier.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Juliet



Rustic allotments are full of romantic charm in the hands of artist Jean-Claude Courtat – see page 66.

Forage for wild berries, flowers and nuts to make your own autumnal decorations – see page 42.

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JEAN-CLAUDE COURTAT/CHARLIE HOPKINSON, CHRISTIAN PETERSEN

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Gorgeous autumn borders at Cumberley in Shropshire, photographed by Jane Sebire – turn to our feature on page 30

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READER OFFERS

- Subscribe to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED now and SAVE 30% on the shop price – plus FREE BOOK worth £20*. See page 28 for details.
- Explore the gardens of Sicily on our READER HOLIDAY with expert guide Helena Attlee – see page 9.
- Turn to page 102 for further tempting offers and a competition for RHS show tickets*.

* Applies to UK readers only

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USA/CANADA GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO Box 421133, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1133 USA.
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Standard subscription rates: UK £47.40 per annum; Eire and Europe £49.97; rest of the world £59.97.
Distribution Frontline, Peterborough. US distribution Source IPD/Speedimpex. Email intlquery@seymour.co.uk
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons Ltd. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED (ISSN 0968-8920) (USPS 015-608) October 2010 is published monthly by Bristol Magazines Ltd., 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, UK. Distributed in the US by Evergreen Marketing, 116 Ram Cat Alley, Suite 201, Seneca, SC 29678-3263. Periodicals postage paid at Seneca, SC and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO Box 421133, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1133 USA.

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The GARDENS ILLUSTRATED cover is printed on 250gsm Respecta Gloss produced in Belgium by Burgo; the china clay filler is supplied from the UK.
BBC Magazines is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests. This magazine can be recycled, for use in newspapers and packaging.
Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point.
All prices are correct at time of going to press.

© BBC Worldwide Ltd. 2010 Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. ISSN 0968-8920

Jan–Jun 2010
33,453

Contributors

NEIL HEPWORTH

"*Exploring Holland, it was fascinating how the Dutch have such a contrasting view of landscape.*"

CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD

The director of the Garden Museum in London since 2006, Christopher is also author of *In Ruins* (Chatto & Windus, 2001). On page 76 he explains how over the last 20 years Dutch plantsmen have influenced the 'new wave' of planting styles.

"*Plants love Carol's garden. She nurtures them tenderly, making displays that are a pleasure to photograph.*"

JONATHAN BUCKLEY

Work by this prolific Gloucestershire-based garden photographer has been published in magazines, newspapers and many books, including *Grow Your Own Garden* with Carol Klein (BBC Books, 2010). He visits Carol's garden once more on page 56.

"*Rousham is a great demonstration of how to use structure in a garden.*"

ARNE MAYNARD

Arne studied architecture before turning to garden design, winning Best in Show at Chelsea in 2000. Since then his design practice has created gardens all over the world. In the first part of his new series, *Design ideas*, he focuses on the landscape at Rousham – see page 86.

"*October in the Savill Garden is magical – an autumnal feast for the senses.*"

FIONA MCLEOD

A garden photographer since 2003, Fiona's work has appeared in several UK magazines. Her current passion is photographing the wildflowers growing in the two-acre chalk downland meadow around her home in Buckinghamshire. She visits the Savill Garden on page 60.

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letters

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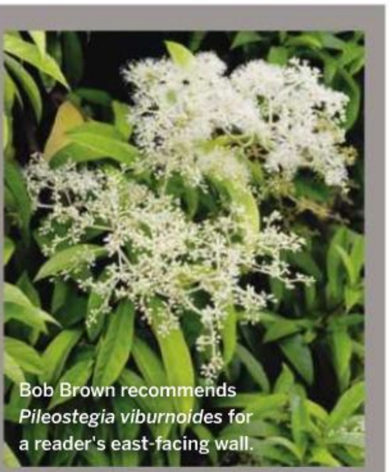
star letter

Is climber tough enough?

Bob Brown sings the praises of a climber called *Apios americana* (issue 164, page 17). Can you tell me please if this would be suitable to grow against an east-facing wall in my Edinburgh garden? Ideally I would like evergreen plants with fragrant flowers (not much to ask for!), and had thought of combining *A. americana* with an evergreen honeysuckle.
Sheila Godman, Edinburgh


Bob Brown recommends *Pileostegia viburnoides* for a reader's east-facing wall.

BOB BROWN ANSWERS *Apios* comes from places as far north as the Canadian Arctic so Edinburgh should not be a challenge even when exposed to their famous nor'easter. But it's herbaceous. This means it dies to the ground each winter – not evergreen. I would try *Pileostegia viburnoides* as an evergreen, self-clinging, white-flowered, east-tolerant climber – even for Edinburgh. Evergreen honeysuckle can be virtually flowerless (it depends on the species) although one that I have, *Lonicera similis* var. delavayi, is full of flower and perfume. BUT all of them are rampageous.

Thanks, Carol

Carol Klein's article in the August issue, headlined *A beautiful border that plants itself*, has it all. Beautiful photos entice you in. Then, as you turn the page, there is a clearly labelled photograph linked to each individual plant photo with its details. The icing on the cake was the unique prose of Carol Klein to inspire and inform. What a joy.
Julie Burnett-Kirk, via email

Alkaline answers

I was surprised by Dr Alan Marr's letter (issue 164, page 8) saying that it is hard to find information about plants that will grow in alkaline soil. My *Hillier Manual of Trees and Shrubs* lists several shrubs, such as *Rosa*, *Weigela*, *Syringa*, *Sarcococca*, *Sambucus*, *Philadelphus*, *Olearia Lonicera*, *Hypericum*, *Fuchsia*, *Euonymus*, *Deutzia*, *Cistus* and many others. Also it suggests trees such as *Malus*, some acers, *Prunus* and some *Sorbus*. On a well-known website I quickly found a book, *Chalk and Limestone Gardening: A Guide to Success on Alkaline Soils* by Sarah Coles, and I think there may be a Wisley Handbook on the subject too. A good local nurseryman will always advise.

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a case of 12 bottles of Cousino Macul Antiguas Reservas Cabernet Sauvignon 2007, worth £8.99 a bottle.* For details visit www.cousinomacul.com
* alternative prize for overseas readers

Cousiño-Macul

I also live in Dorset, but in the east of the county, where the soil is neutral, light and sandy. I only have a patio garden at the moment, but I have been buying GARDENS ILLUSTRATED since issue one and still can't resist it when it comes out each month. The articles are well written and interesting. I especially enjoy the feature by nurseryman Bob Brown each month. He has some great plant suggestions.
Gill Hamilton, Ferndown, Dorset

Mystery solved

Your photo of the mystery planter brought a smile to my face (*Letters*, issue 165, page 8). It's *Major Planter* by Dennis Fairweather (see www.fairweathersculpture.com). I have a really soft spot for him as he featured in my final project at college 12 years ago.
Julie Vann, Outerspaces Garden Design, Bedfordshire

- Thanks to all the other readers who contacted us with Dennis's name.

Tips for oranges?

About five years ago my parents 'handed down' an orange tree in a large pot, which they had grown from a pip. It is now at least 20 years old. Each year I bring it into the conservatory when winter falls and wheel it out again in spring. Are there any books or advice I might be able to obtain about its care and particularly how to increase its chances of fruiting regularly? Perhaps readers could offer advice?
John Egan, via email

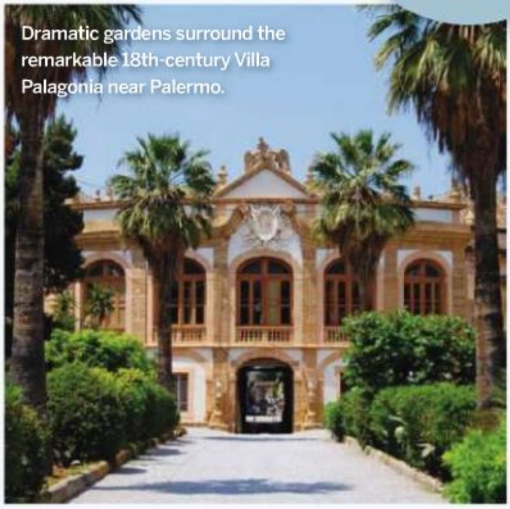
ADDENDUM

The designer involved with *The Garden Party to Make a Difference* was Adam Hunt, not Alan Hunt, as incorrectly stated in issue 165, page 13. www.urquhartandhunt.com

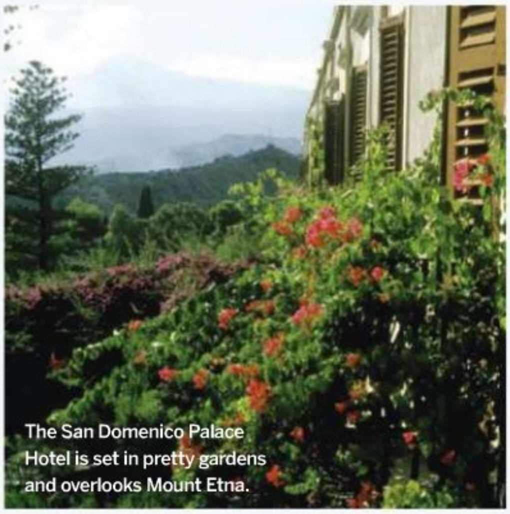
We reserve the right to edit correspondence.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

The botanical gardens of Palermo host a remarkable collection of plants in 25 acres of grounds.



Dramatic gardens surround the remarkable 18th-century Villa Palagonia near Palermo.



The San Domenico Palace Hotel is set in pretty gardens and overlooks Mount Etna.

TOP RIGHT: GREG BALFOUR EVANS / ALAMY. OTHERS: PHOTOLIBRARY

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HELENA ATTLEE

Your guide is the author of several books about Italian gardens. She lectures widely, writes for a number of magazines and newspapers, and has many year's experience of leading garden tours in Italy.

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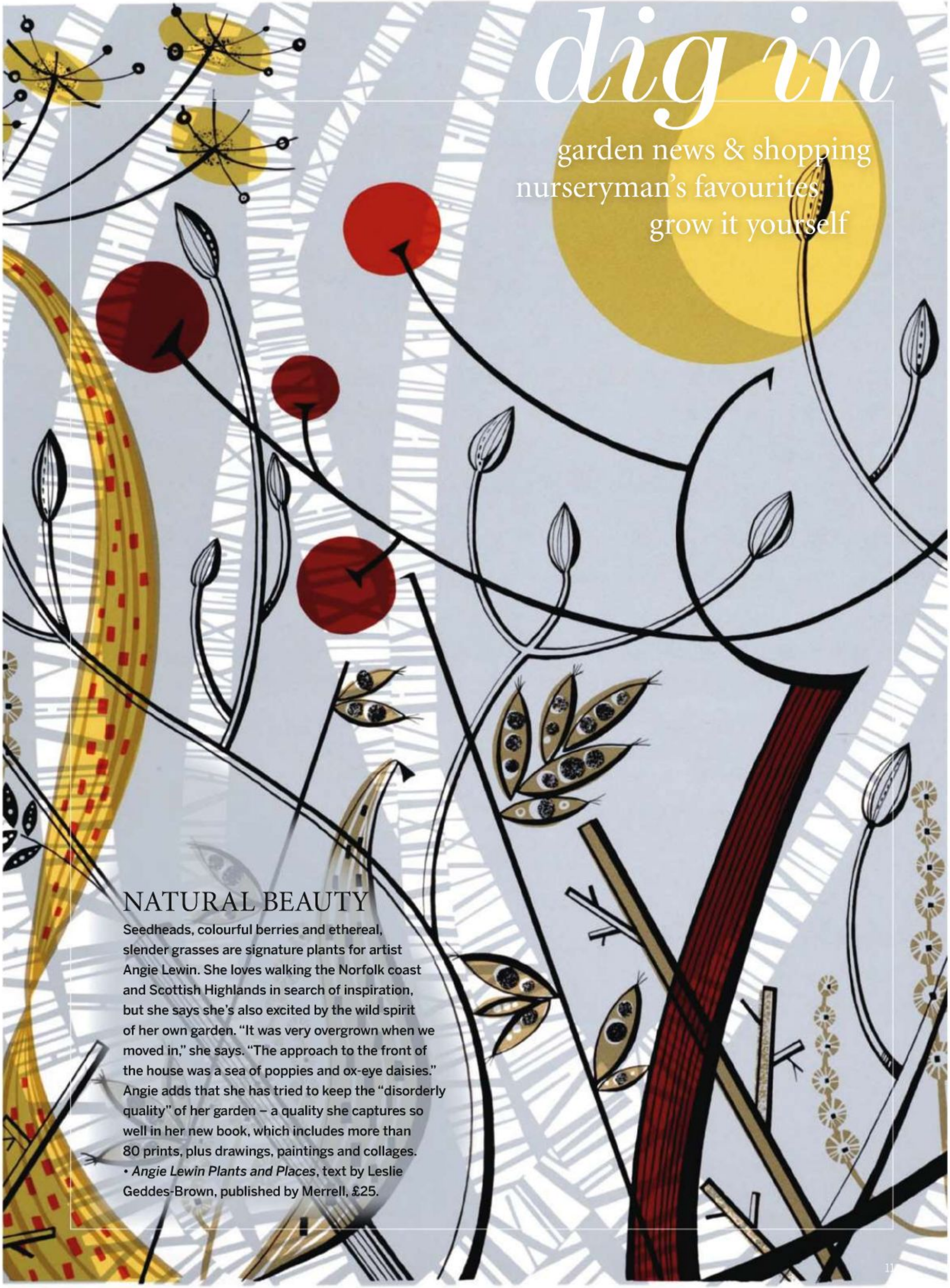

NATURAL BEAUTY

Seedheads, colourful berries and ethereal, slender grasses are signature plants for artist Angie Lewin. She loves walking the Norfolk coast and Scottish Highlands in search of inspiration, but she says she's also excited by the wild spirit of her own garden. "It was very overgrown when we moved in," she says. "The approach to the front of the house was a sea of poppies and ox-eye daisies." Angie adds that she has tried to keep the "disorderly quality" of her garden – a quality she captures so well in her new book, which includes more than 80 prints, plus drawings, paintings and collages.

• *Angie Lewin Plants and Places*, text by Leslie Geddes-Brown, published by Merrell, £25.

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Candle Lanterns : Pigs & Others

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I'M IN THE GARDEN
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The temporary shop will take autumn as its inspiration just as an earlier event in April focused on spring.

Pop-up shop

An eclectic collection of flowers and plants, natural objects, handmade artefacts and intriguing sculptures will tempt curious buyers in Amsterdam this month. Open for just ten days and housed in an old warehouse in the centre of the city, this unique mix between a gallery and flower shop is the latest in a trend for 'pop-up shops'. You can even dine among the flowers for a truly unique experience. 15-24 October 2010, Magazijn, Oudezijdsvoorburgwal 153, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. For full details, including dinner bookings, go to www.shop-for-a-week.com

TALKING GARDENS

Great Dixter's head gardener Fergus Garrett (above), writer Karl Sabbagh, garden expert Val Bourne and nurseryman Bob Brown are all speakers at Armscote Manor's series of October talks in Warwickshire. For details call 01608 682375, www.armscotemanor.co.uk.

Evergreen baskets

Sedum matting supplier Enviromat is selling offcuts perfect for use as hanging-basket liners. The matting includes six kinds of sedum, grown for year-round colour and texture. Offcuts add up to an area of 50cm x 50cm, and are available for £7.05 each (usually £17.63). The mats are quite heavy, so P&P costs £17.44 (this is a flat rate, so buying several at once works out cheaper). Tel 01842 828266, www.enviromat.co.uk

Media

TELEVISION

• *Gardeners' World*
Fridays, 8pm, BBC2
Lots of autumn tasks, plus Alys gives tips on choosing an apple tree and Joe plants climbers for year-round interest.

RADIO

• *Gardeners' Question Time*
Topical tips and advice from the panel. Fridays 3pm, BBC Radio 4 (repeated Sundays 2pm). See also page 100.

• *Saving Species*
Conservationist and broadcaster Brett Westwood explores topical natural history stories. Tuesdays, 11am, BBC Radio 4. See www.bbc.co.uk/savingspecies

LOOKING AHEAD

- We're looking forward to a new series from Alan Titchmarsh in which he celebrates England's gardening heritage. No confirmed details yet, but keep an eye out over the coming months.

NOTE Programme details correct at time of going to press but dates and times are subject to change.

Mark Apple Day on 21 October. Now in its 21st year, the aim is to celebrate all things appley, as well as the apple tree's importance in our cultural landscape. Visit www.commonground.org.uk to find out more about events held country-wide.

APPLES: JAMES JACKSON / ALAMY: SHOP-FOR-A-WEEK: JEANNINE GOVAERS: ENVIROMAT: AMY HILSDON

NOSEY PARKER

Hugh Johnson

Known for his wine expertise, Hugh is also an accomplished gardener and tree enthusiast

What is your earliest garden/gardening memory? My parents had a wonderful bramble patch almost on the beach at Selsey in Sussex, which my father made into a maze for us four children.

Who inspired your love of gardening? My father, with his bonfires on the Kentish North Downs and all the 'interesting' little jobs he gave us.

How have you developed the garden at your home Saling Hall? My personal project is the arboretum of about eight acres we made around an old gravel pit used in the Second World War as an airmen's camp. In 40 years I have added several ponds and many walks, hedges and alleys. What started as a tree collection has become a woodland garden.

What is your favourite plant and why? I am in awe of the English oak. I used to love the elm, but almost any healthy tree gives me joy. I love the silver cricket bat willows that line the Essex ditches. And of course I love roses, phlox, irises, hydrangeas.

What books are on your bedside table currently? The latest issue of the journal *Hortus*, Patrick O'Bryan's *The Hundred Days*, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, André Jullien's *Topographie de Tous les Vignobles Connus*.

Not a lot of people know this about me... I played the trumpet in a New Orleans Mardi Gras parade, aged 18.

Trees: A Lifetime's Journey Through Forest, Woods and Gardens by Hugh Johnson is published by Mitchell Beazley priced £30. Hugh will be talking about his book at the Garden Museum on 12 October, 6.30pm (for 7pm start). Tickets £20. Book in advance on 020 7401 8865, or go to the website at www.gardenmuseum.org.uk for more details. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can book tickets at a discounted price of just £15. Please quote the magazine when you call.

Diary

- ***Henley Literary Festival***
Talks on a range of subjects including Sarah Raven on her latest book *Food for the Family* (1 October, 10.30am, £6). The festival runs from 29 September to 3 October. For details call 0118 972 4700 or go to www.henleyliteraryfestival.co.uk.
- ***Tree weekend***
Tree-planting demonstrations, talks and guided tours of arboretum and garden. 9-10 October, 10am-5pm, £4 garden entry. Place for Plants, East Bergholt, Suffolk CO7 6UP. Tel 01206 299224, www.placeforplants.co.uk
- ***Pruning shrubs***
Short course giving hints and tips on best practice. Booking essential. 14 October 10.30am-12.30pm, £17.50. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200, www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk
- ***Autumn colour weekends at Wakehurst Place*** Guided walks and information available to help visitors enjoy the autumn colours. Weekends from 16 October to 7 November. 11.30am-2pm with minibus tours from 10am on 24 and 31 October. Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6TN. Tel 01444 894066, www.kew.org/visit-wakehurst

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Season of fruitfulness

The Royal Horticultural Society celebrates autumn at its London Autumn Harvest Show. The show includes displays of expertly grown fruit and vegetables, planting demonstrations for autumn colour, nursery stands, spectacular dahlias from experts Winchester Growers and a floral extravaganza from Interflora. 5-6 October, Horticultural Halls, Westminster, London SW1. £5 (Tuesday), £3 (Wednesday). Tel 0845 612 1253, www.rhs.org.uk/londonshows

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*24-28 May 2011 – **"Chelsea Flower Show"**, London*

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Euphorbia griffithii 'Dixter'

It's traditional to comment on this plant in spring, when orange shoots pierce through the drabness, or in early summer, when it complements hot planting schemes with its vivid, red-orange flowers. I find its autumn colour much more remarkable. It wanders – by rhizome. As a nurseryman I have never found this to be a problem, because demand means it's always being reduced at the edges. This might not be true in an orderly garden – but I've never heard any complaints. Even after the leaves have dropped off, the stems remain bright coral pink and draw the eye from across the nursery.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **1m x 1m.**
ORIGINS **A Chinese and Himalayan plant but this cultivar was selected at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd. What an acclamation.**
CONDITIONS **Plant it anywhere except over precious alpines or under trees. Likes moist, well-drained soils, but will put up with improved clay.**
SEASON **Early spring to late autumn, when it finally retreats underground.**

October plants

Summary may be over, but a few outstanding plants still look at their vibrant best

WORDS **BOB BROWN** PHOTOGRAPHS **TORIE CHUGG**

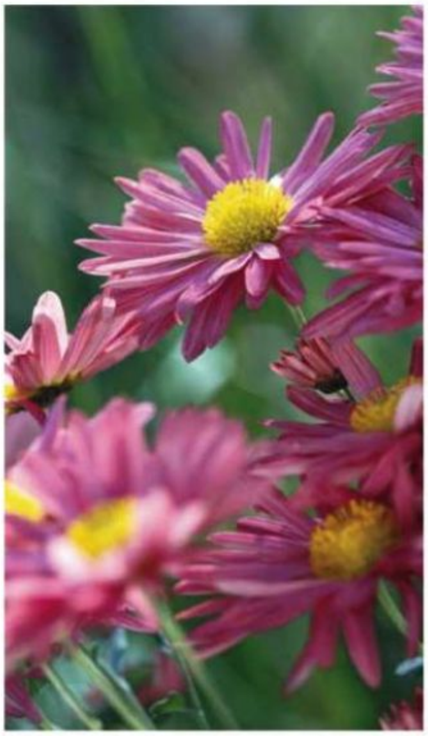
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

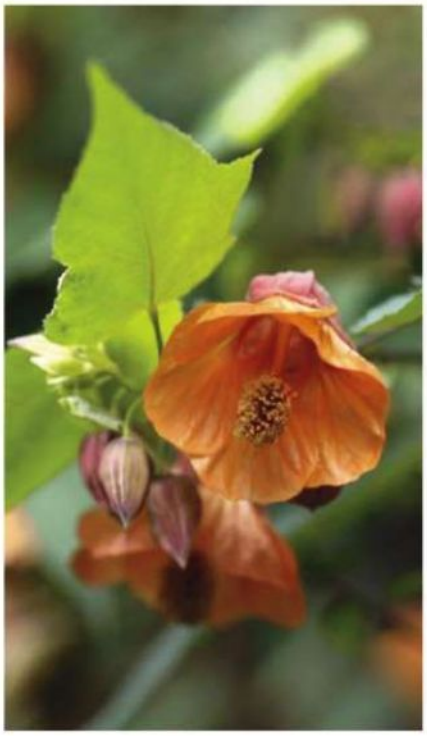
Bob Brown owns Cotswold Garden Flowers, a mecca for plant lovers, which stocks a huge range of rare and beautiful plants

Chrysanthemum indicum 'Rose Madder'

The hardiest (and best) chrysanthemums tend not to have names. This is because they've survived in gardens for generations, and everyone has forgotten what they're called. People knock on doors and ask for a root and are graciously given bits. I named this 'Rose Madder' because it is. Someone else might call it 'Josephine Bloggs'. This justifiably drives National Collection holder Judy Barker bananas as the same plant goes around under several names – none correct. Wonderful (the plant, not the bananas).

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 45cm.
ORIGINS The species, China; the cultivar, who knows?
CONDITIONS If buffeted from youth, it will not require support. Tolerates most soils.
SEASON September to November.





Abutilon x milleri

I'm often heard to say that such and such a plant "Has no faults". In reality this is damning with faint praise, because the plant might be fairly dull. I like *spirited* plants, just as I prefer spirited people – as a teacher, teenagers qualified. Stock of this plant came from Helen Dillon: "Here, have this. It's good and hardy." (Or something along those lines.) She's never wrong but Dublin hardiness is not Evesham hardiness, so it graces a wall near my front door and drips colour seemingly forever. This has no faults and it *is* spirited. Ten out of ten, really.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 4m x 4m.
ORIGINS A hybrid of two South American species, *A. megapotamicum* and *A. pictum*.
CONDITIONS Mine is happy in half to full shade on my house wall.
SEASON June to November.

Aster laevis 'White Climax'

This is an old-fashioned invasive Michaelmas daisy. However, it has many good qualities to offset its running habits. It flowers late in the year; frost has little or no effect on the flowers; the foliage is mildew-free and a good deep green; it refuses to die as a plant; it's a fantastic and welcome cut flower (and serves as cut foliage and cut bud earlier); late bees and butterflies love it; and the centre of the flower has a lovely greenish hue. In less solid clay than mine it's easy to limit its spread by pulling it up.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1.5m x 1km.
ORIGINS Northern USA, southern Canada.
CONDITIONS It will spread, but paths hem mine in and shrubs have a similar effect. Herbaceous borders would be a little vulnerable. Tolerates most soils.
SEASON Flowers October to November.

Nerine 'Harlequin'

I can be fazed by too many *Nerine* hybrids at once. They are all so gorgeously coloured, have exquisite form, sparkle in strong, direct light and come fresh when nature is beginning to shut down. Of all the hybrids, 'Harlequin' is the one I home in on. Its flower colouring is distinct – salmon-pink with white lining from dark stems. It's also more delicate than many other kinds, and flowers profusely. All this from relatively small bulbs. Be aware – it's not frost hardy.

• See *Places to visit*, below, and turn to page 46 for our *Plant profile* on nerines.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 40cm x 10cm.
ORIGINS Its parents are from mountainous parts of South Africa.
CONDITIONS Grow in a pot on a bright windowsill or conservatory, or a greenhouse.
SEASON October to November.

Crocus goulimyi

Good, garden-persistent crocuses are not so common. In order to survive in gardens in Britain they need hot dry summers. Britain doesn't do hot dry summers reliably. Bulbs evolved as a natural defence against drought (not to help Holland's balance of trade). The best place to plant garden bulbs is under deciduous trees where, on the whole, tree roots at least ensure the dry bit. And dry shady places can be a problem to furnish, so a display of bulbs helps. *Crocus goulimyi* is more persistent than most crocus bulbs and provides uplift in a good season.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15cm x 15cm.
ORIGINS Greece and Turkey.
CONDITIONS Likes dry soils in summer; plant under deciduous trees.
SEASON October to November.

Places to visit

Bob Brown names some of his favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

Go and be fazed (and feel better) by visiting nerine collections. There are several.

Exbury is east of the New Forest and south of Southampton. Lionel de Rothschild acquired and bred many hybrid nerines in the 1950s and 60s, which have been augmented by the best hybrids bred by Sir Peter Smithers in Switzerland.

The annual *Nerine* display at the Five Arrows Gallery, Exbury.

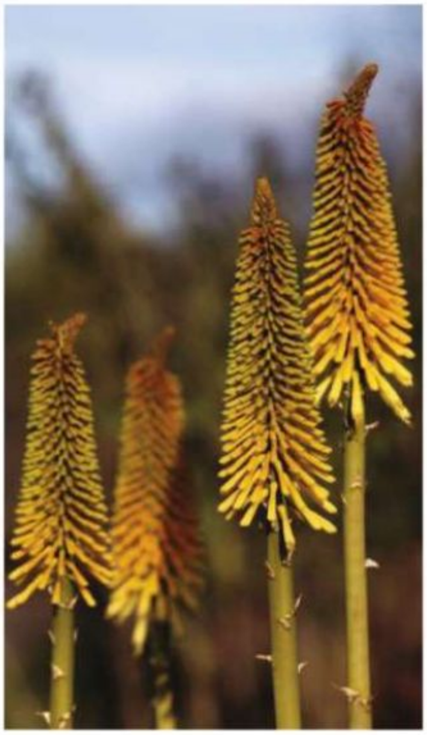
WITH KIND PERMISSION FROM EXBURY GARDENS

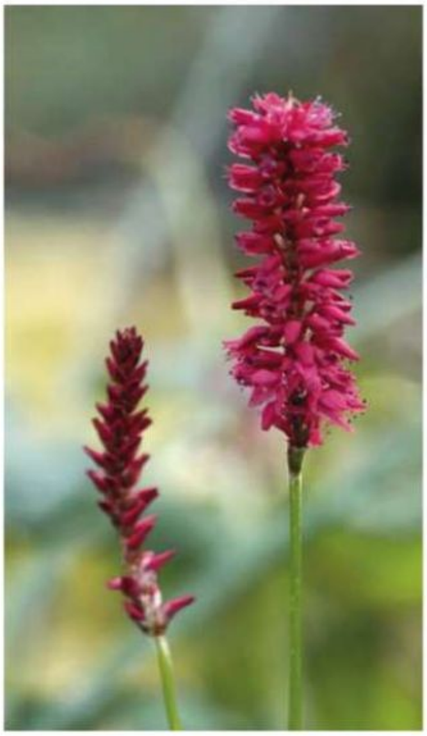
Colours range from the original orange through red to white and blueish mauve. See the collection at www.nerines.com. Even without the nerines, Exbury is a wonderful garden to visit in autumn. Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ. Open daily from 9am to 5pm. Tel 023 8089 1203, www.exbury.co.uk

Kniphofia 'Frances Victoria'

Just when you think summer has finally finished, this poker does its thing and reminds me that winter doesn't really close in until December. It's a seedling raised by my son from random, bee-produced seed (and a good mother). I guess its father had to be *Kniphofia linearifolia* because of its shape and season of flowering. It's tall and thin, unlike its wonderfully cuddly namesake (the former manager of the nursery). Perversity drew me to this naming.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 2-3m x 50cm.
ORIGINS Selected at Cotswold Garden Flowers from South African ancestors.
CONDITIONS Most soils, even clay; plant in sun or partial shade.
SEASON October to late November.





Persicaria amplexicaulis 'Blackfield'

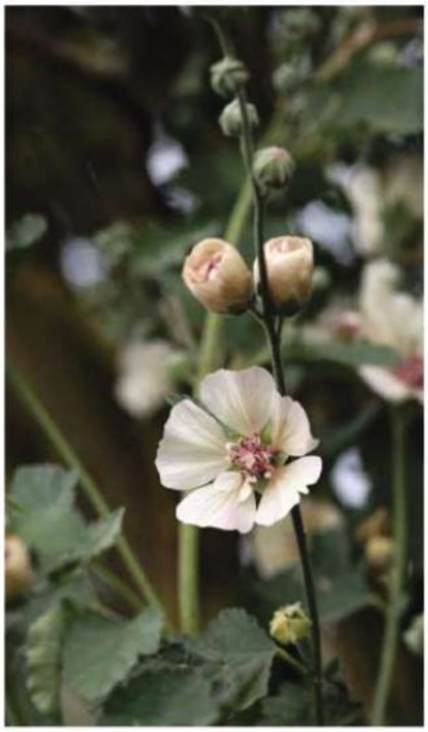
This is one of Belgian garden designer Chris Ghyselen's indestructible plants. His principle must be to start with something that grows well and never dies and make it look better. The species, *Persicaria amplexicaulis*, is rather boring. It has a thin covering of wispy red flowers over plain foliage dusted with hoover-bag emptyings. 'Blackfield' has lots of fat spikes of rich, carmine-red flowers over plain dark green foliage. Plant it, walk away and return 50 years later and it will still be there. Another good thing to come out of Belgium.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 60cm.
ORIGINS The species is from the Himalayas; this cultivar was bred in Belgium.
CONDITIONS Easy-going, but likes moist soil.
SEASON Late August to November.

x *Alcalthaea suffrutescens* 'Parkallee'

This intergeneric hybrid was raised in 1953 by crossing hollyhocks with *Althaea cannabina*. The aim was to rid the hollyhocks of their foliage-deforming rust disease. It succeeded and the foliage is a clean grey-green but the hybrids were not available until the late 1990s, partly because of propagation difficulties. The satiny petals change from creamy-yellow to apricot and get slightly more double as the temperature drops. I like it best in October.

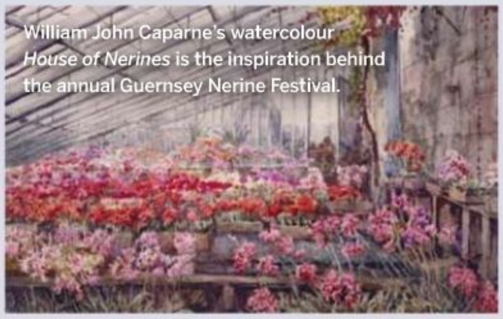
HEIGHT/SPREAD 2m x 1.6m.
ORIGINS Raised in Hungary by Zoltan Kovats from Middle Eastern and Eurasian parents.
CONDITIONS It will grow to the best shape in exposed places with sun and wind. Plant in heavy or light soils; tolerates chalk and sand.
SEASON Flowers from July to November.



Nerines can also be seen at **The Garden House**, where head gardener Matt Bishop is continuing a breeding programme begun by the late botanist Terry Jones, crossing *N. bowdenii* with *N. sarniensis* to produce hardy nerines in a wider range of colours. Many of Terry's hybrids are planted out (though the breeding stock is behind the scenes). There are some stunners. Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7LQ. Open daily, 10.30am to 5pm. Tel 01822 854769, www.thegardenhouse.org.uk

In the 17th century *Nerine sarniensis* paused in Guernsey on its journey from South Africa to mainland Europe, where it acquired its common name, the Guernsey lily. The bulb is prolific on the island and many gardens have good displays but the focus is the annual **Guernsey Nerine Festival**, 9-23 October. Lower Glasshouse, Candie Gardens, Saint Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 1UG. Tel 01481 239444.

- For more about nerines turn to our *Plant profile* on page 46.



William John Caparne's watercolour *House of Nerines* is the inspiration behind the annual Guernsey Nerine Festival.

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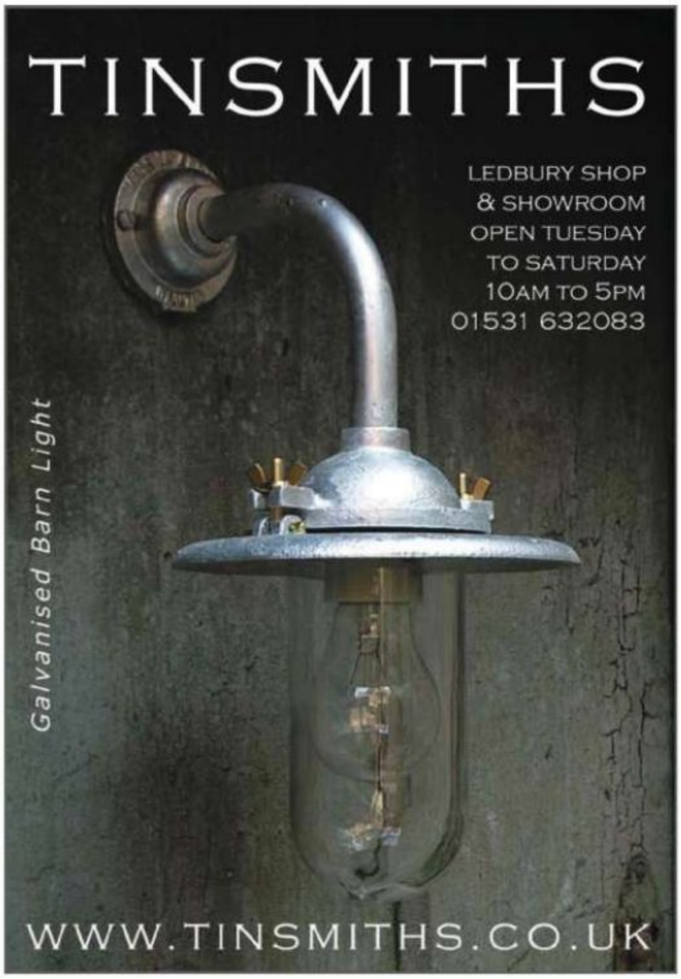

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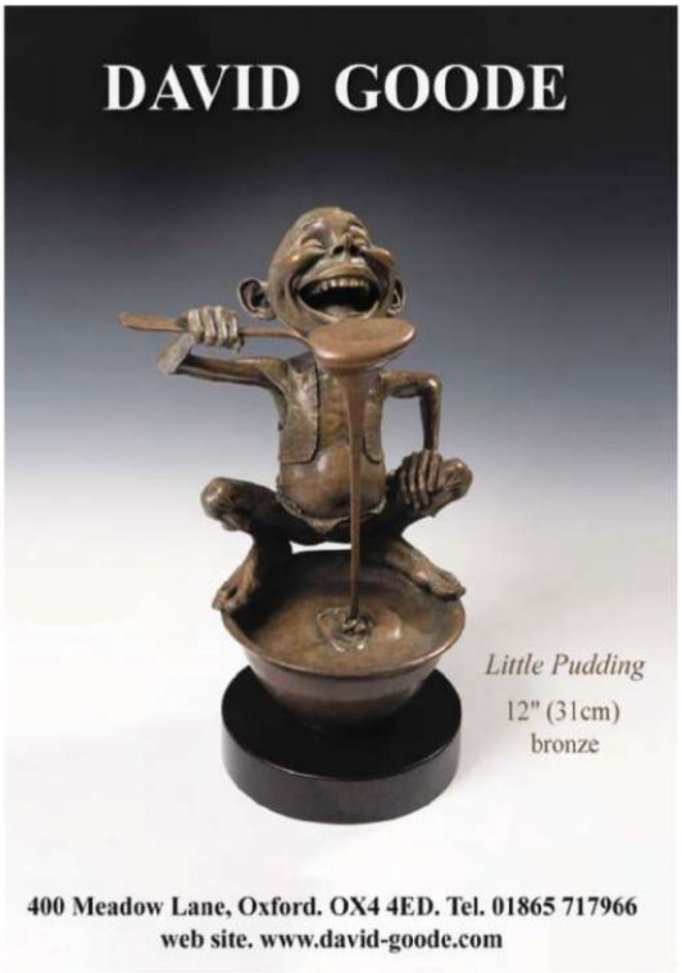

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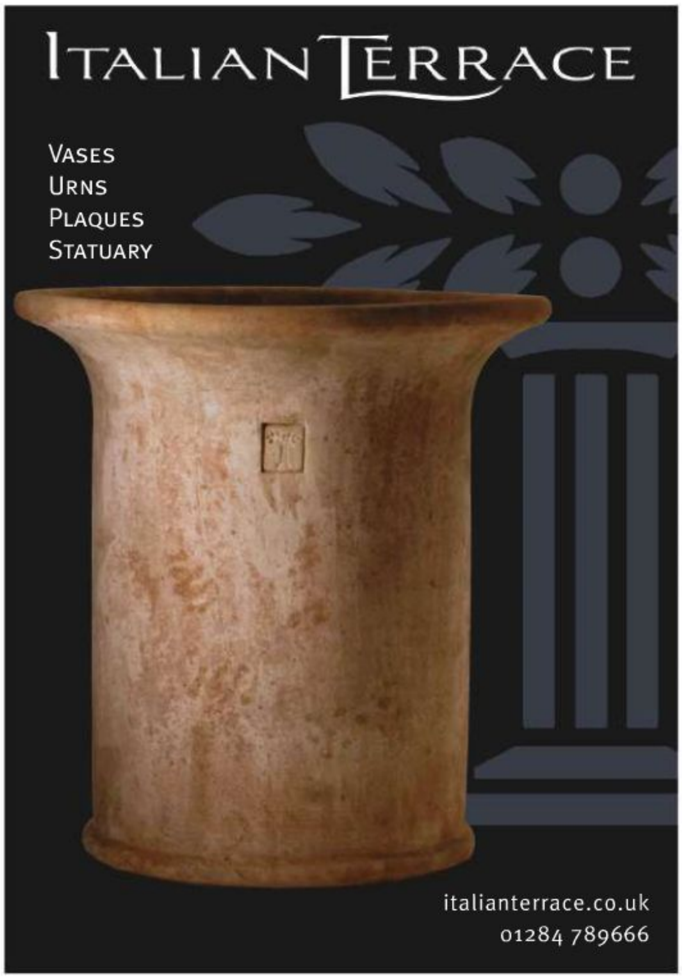

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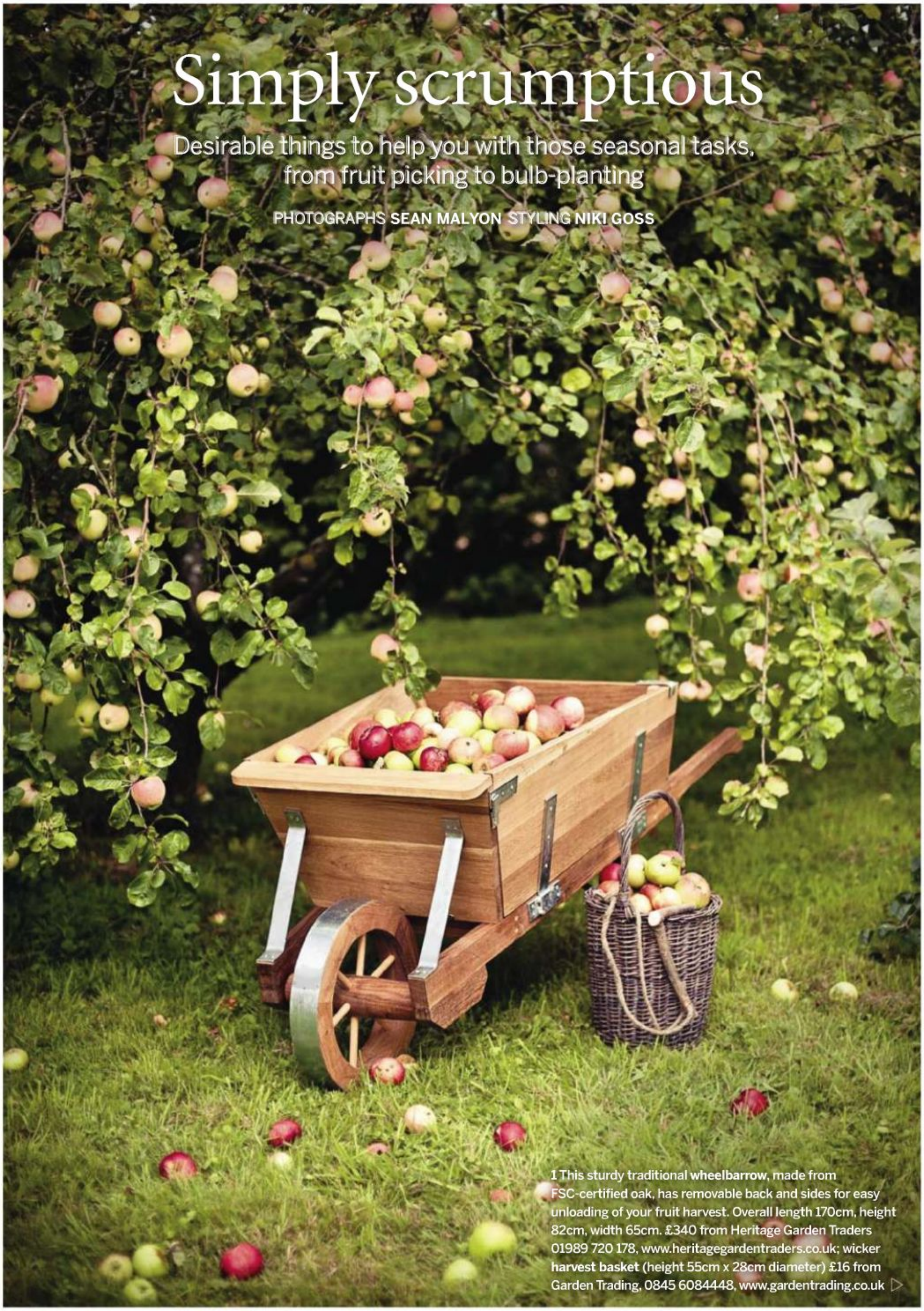
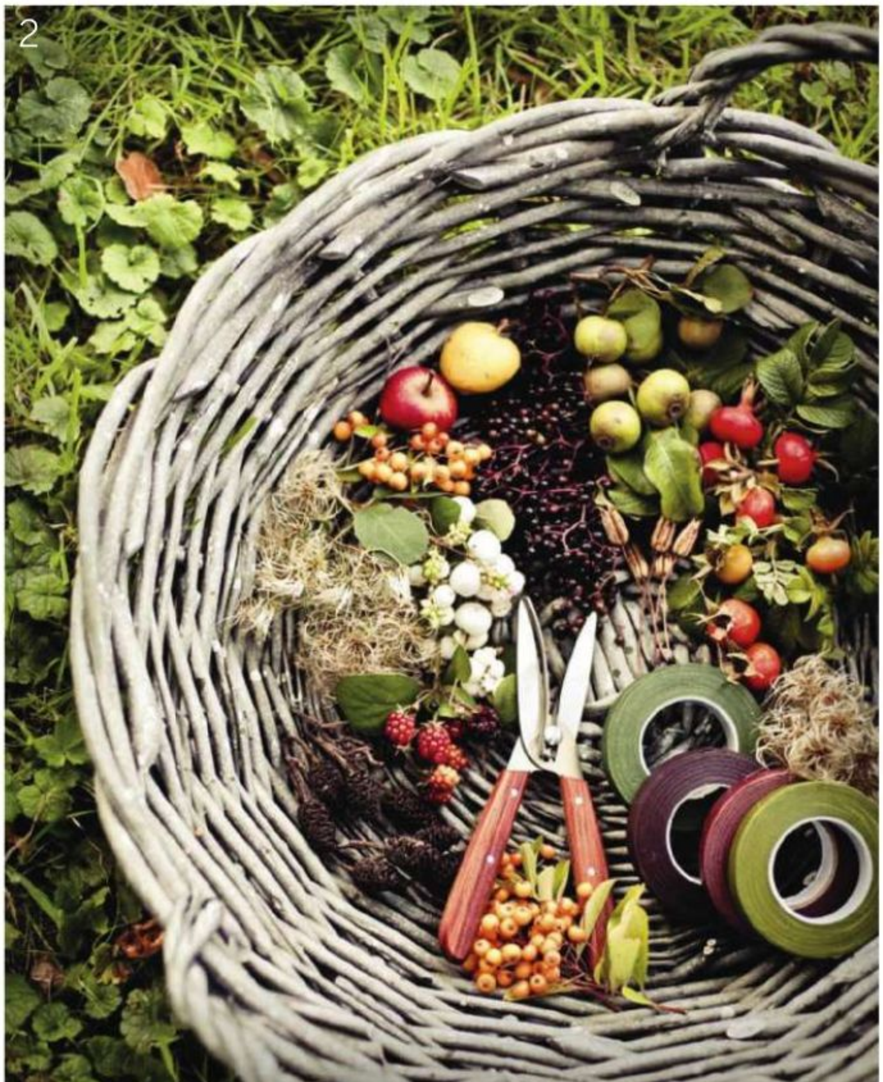
PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **NIKI GOSS**

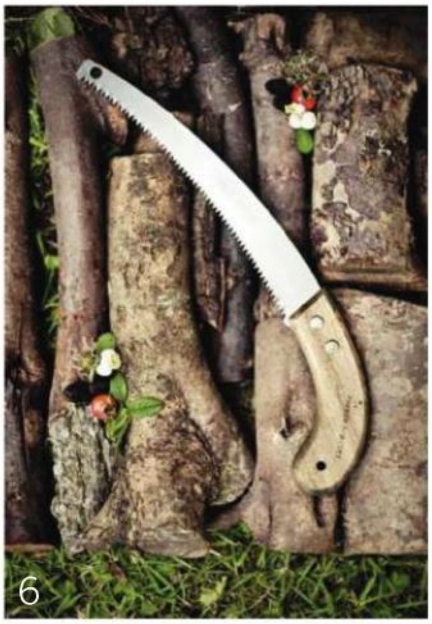


1 This sturdy traditional **wheelbarrow**, made from FSC-certified oak, has removable back and sides for easy unloading of your fruit harvest. Overall length 170cm, height 82cm, width 65cm. £340 from Heritage Garden Traders 01989 720 178, www.heritagegardentraders.co.uk; wicker **harvest basket** (height 55cm x 28cm diameter) £16 from Garden Trading, 0845 6084448, www.gardentrading.co.uk ▷

SHOT ON LOCATION AT BARLEY WOOD WALLED GARDEN, WRINGTON, SOMERSET. WWW.WALLEDGARDEN.CO.UK



▷ **2** Collect autumn fruits, berries and seedheads for decorative displays (see page 42) using this shallow willow **basket** in muted grey. 57cm diameter x 17cm high, £15 from Garden Trading (see no. 1, previous page); 'cut & hold' **snips** grip the cut stem, allowing you to harvest fruit one-handed. €22.90 from De Wiltfang, +31 346 218 111, www.dewiltfang.com; **floral tape** is great for binding stems of flowers for use in arrangements and decorations. Available in a selection of colours to match different stems, £1.95 (12mm x 27m roll) from Jane Asher, 020 7584 6177, www.janeasher.com



3 Chunky 3D **wire letters** can be dressed up with decorative berries, or left plain to gently rust. 14.5cm high, £5 each from Urban Outfitters, www.urbanoutfitters.co.uk

4 Get planting spring bulbs with this pointed DeWit metal **dibber**, £19.99, great for large quantities of small bulbs. Larger bulbs can be planted using the DeWit **bulb trowel** £28.99, both from Crocus, 0844 557 2233, www.crocus.co.uk; keep twine or flexi-tie to hand in this **copper tin**, with a hole in the lid to pull twine through. 19.5cm high x 9.5cm wide, £29.95 from Heritage Garden Traders (see no. 1, previous page).

5 Reach fruit high in the branches using a **wicker fruit picker**, which can be attached to a handle of any length using the sliding grip. £15.95 from Heritage Garden Traders (see no. 1, previous page)

6 Make light work of chopping small logs for firewood or pruning trees with this Joseph Bentley traditional curved **saw**, with stainless steel blade and FSC oak handle, £12.99 from Crocus, 0844 557 2233, www.crocus.co.uk☐

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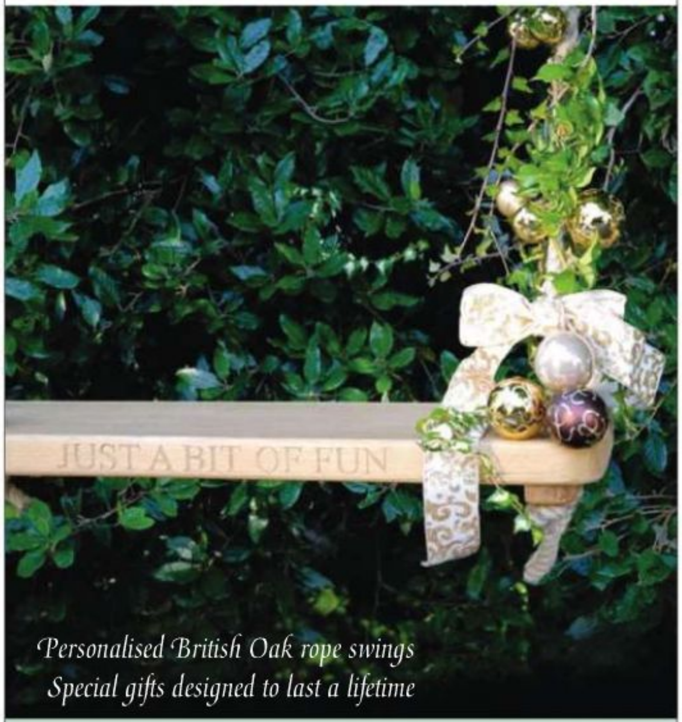

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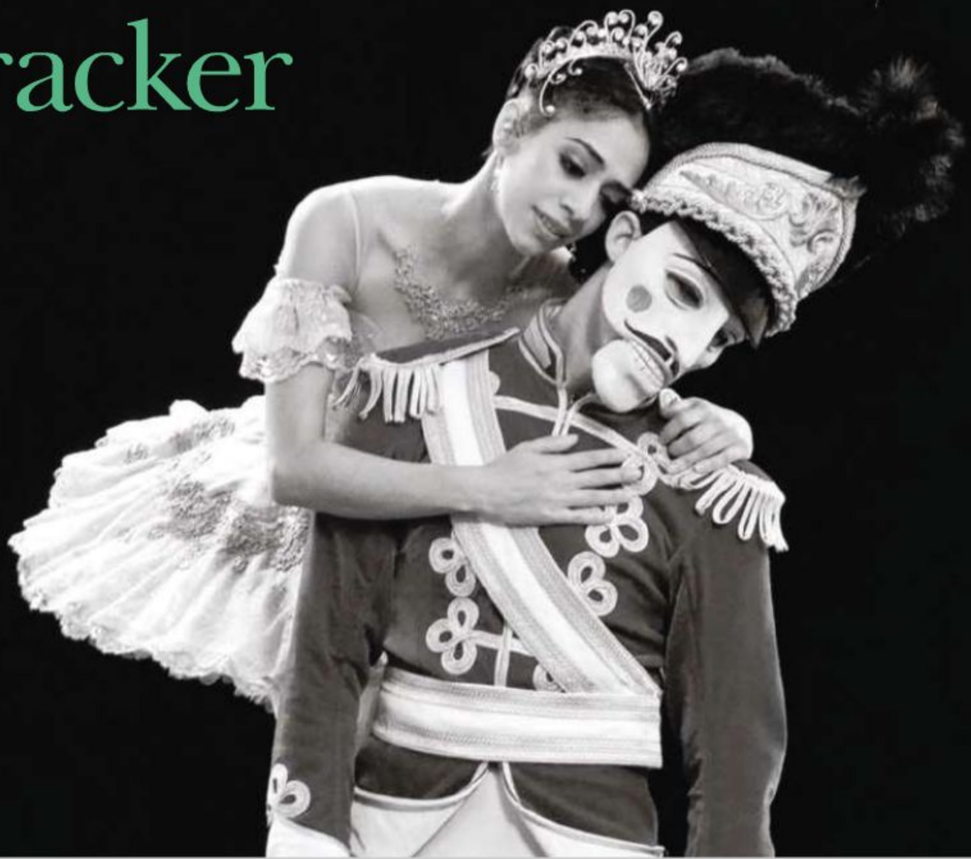

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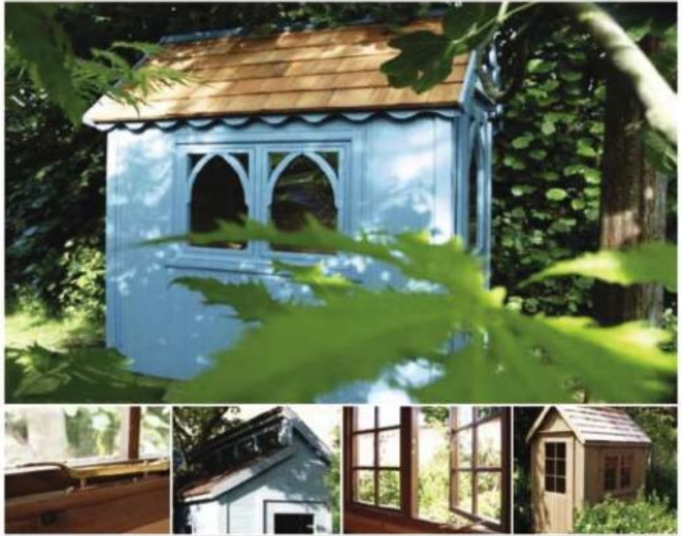

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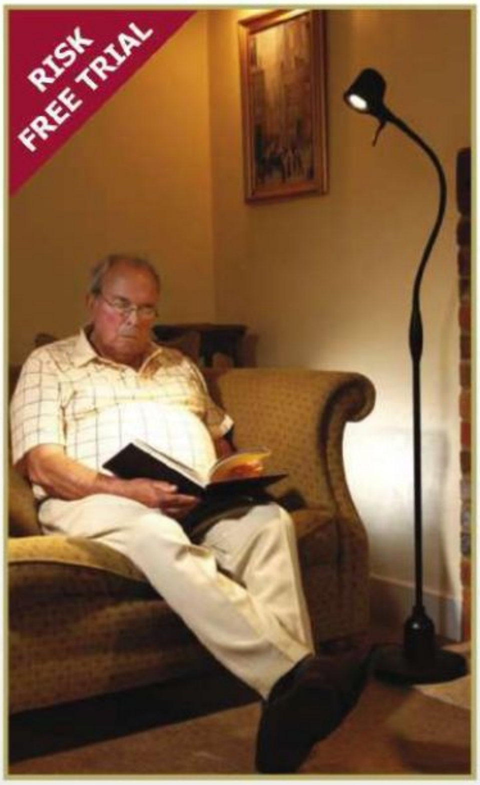

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Pumpkins, courgettes & winter squashes

This versatile group of vegetables tastes delicious and looks lovely growing in your garden

WORDS **ALYS FOWLER** ILLUSTRATIONS **KERRY LEMON**

Pumpkins, courgettes, marrows and the increasingly popular winter squash offer a rainbow of colours to the garden and culinary delights to the kitchen. They are easy to grow and can be used as ground cover or as climbers, and range in all manner of size, so there's one for every garden.

Courgettes are relatively expensive to buy because their thin skins make them hard to transport. A single plant produces 20 or more fruits, so you can see why they are such a popular vegetable to grow at home.

Large-fruited pumpkins and winter squashes need more space than courgettes, so are best planted in bigger gardens and allotments, where their large leaf canopies can be used to out-compete weeds.

> “ they offer a rainbow of colours to the garden and culinary delights to the kitchen ”

Courgettes and marrows are essentially the same thing, except courgettes are picked young, no bigger than the length of your thumb for the best flavour; whereas marrows are left to grow fat. Unless marrows are your thing, I'd just grow ordinary courgettes and let a few grow into marrows at the end of the season. Productivity slows down hugely once the marrows appear.

Marrows and pumpkins will store for several months. Winter squash can easily be stored for four months or more without affecting its quality, so it's possible to have year-round supplies.

Sowing

Squash, pumpkin and courgette seed germinates at around 13-15°C and it's best to do this indoors. Plant in 9cm pots, a pair of seeds in each. Once they have germinated, thin out the weakest of the two.

In general it is best to sow roughly a month before the last frost but in practice, if your seedlings fail or get nibbled, you can sow as late as the end of May.

Planting

You'll need to harden-off indoor-raised seedlings before planting out. Winter squash and pumpkins are particularly susceptible to cold weather and may need to be covered with cloches in the beginning. Plant out when you have at least two or three true leaves.

Courgettes and summer squashes should be planted out 90cm apart. Smaller winter squash and pumpkin cultivars should be planted out 1.5m apart and large ones at 2m-2.5m apart. They can be planted closer if you train the trailing types either up a short fence or trellis, or around themselves in a spiral. These will need to be tied-in or pegged down. Place a cane at the centre of the plant so you know where to water.

Caring for your crop

It's important to 'stop' trailing winter squash and pumpkins so that they concentrate their energy into two or three fruit per plant (perhaps four for smaller cultivars). This means pinching out the growing tip when you have the desired amount of fruit and removing any subsequent flowers or fruit. You can also remove any side shoot that appears beyond the fruit, to concentrate growth. ▷

Alys Fowler studied horticulture at Wisley and Kew before joining *Gardeners' World* in 2006

▷ Pumpkins, winter squash and marrows need full sun to ripen their skins. Near the end of the season it may help to remove leaves that are shading plants. Rotate fruits gently so all sides have some sun. You can sit fruits on top of upturned plates or straw to dry the bottoms out.

Harvesting and storing

Harvest squashes and pumpkins with a bit of stalk on either side of the cut, or rot may set in. Don't carry the fruit by its stalk as this can damage it, also leading to rot.

Marrows, winter squash and pumpkins need to be stored somewhere warm to cure for several weeks. This improves flavour and prolongs storage. Marrows and pumpkins can go in a warm greenhouse or garage. For winter squashes the initial storage temperature needs to be 27-30°C for 7-13 days; they should then spend a month at 7-10°C. Eat a just-picked kabocha (*Curcurbita maxima* Kabocha Group) and it will taste of little; cured, it will taste divine.

Winter squash and pumpkins can be baked, roasted, stir-fried, used in soups, sweet pies, bread and biscuits. Marrows, courgettes, pumpkins and squash can all be used to make jams and pickles.□

NEXT MONTH Broad beans

BBC Alys Fowler presents *Gardeners' World* on BBC2, Fridays at 8.30pm.

What to plant

Alys recommends her favourite cultivars for a delicious and colourful harvest

Summer squash

'Patty Pan' has flying-saucer shaped fruit that can be eaten small and tender or allowed to grow larger for cooking. Bush-forming habit.

'Sunburst' F1 is a yellow skinned 'Patty Pan' type that is very high yielding, and has a good flavour. This is one for the ornamental vegetable garden.

'Vegetable spaghetti' has the most extraordinary flesh that when cooked whole and scooped out looks just like spaghetti. Trailing habit in full sun. Harvest fruits when they are 20cm long. Don't expect a huge yield.

Winter squash

'Harrier' F1 is a butternut squash bred for our climate. Sweet flavour to its flesh, stores well and can be ready in just over three months.

'Uchiki Kuri' is an onion-shaped squash, with fantastic flavour and brilliant, bright orange skin and flesh. It matures late in the season, but stores very well. It's a kabocha-type squash (*Curcurbita maxima* Kabocha Group), which originated in cultivation in Japan having been introduced there from America as early as 1540.

'Crown Prince' is another kabocha squash, with steely blue skin and bright orange flesh. It's hard to beat the flavour of this one, and it has exceptional storage qualities.

'Berrettina Piacentina' is a beautiful winter squash with knobbly, steel-grey green skin and deep-orange flesh. It has a fantastic flavour and good storage qualities.

'Invincible' is an improved version of 'Crown Prince'.

'Turk's Turban' has distinctively shaped fruits with green, white and orange stripes. It's particularly good for stuffing and cooking whole (and can even be used as a soup terrine).

Pumpkin

'Baby Bear' is small, weighing 500g to 1kg, and perfect for soups and pies. The seeds are semi-hull less, so can be toasted for snacks.

'Atlantic Giant' (also known as 'Dill's Atlantic Giant') is for those who want to break records. Apparently this kind of pumpkin can reach a weight of up to 780kg (see www.howarddill.com).

Jack O'Lantern is the best for carving at Halloween, with good orange flesh and a decent size – between 5kg and 7kg.

Courgette

Squashes and pumpkins are forms of *Curcurbita maxima*; courgettes and marrows are cultivars of *C. pepo*.

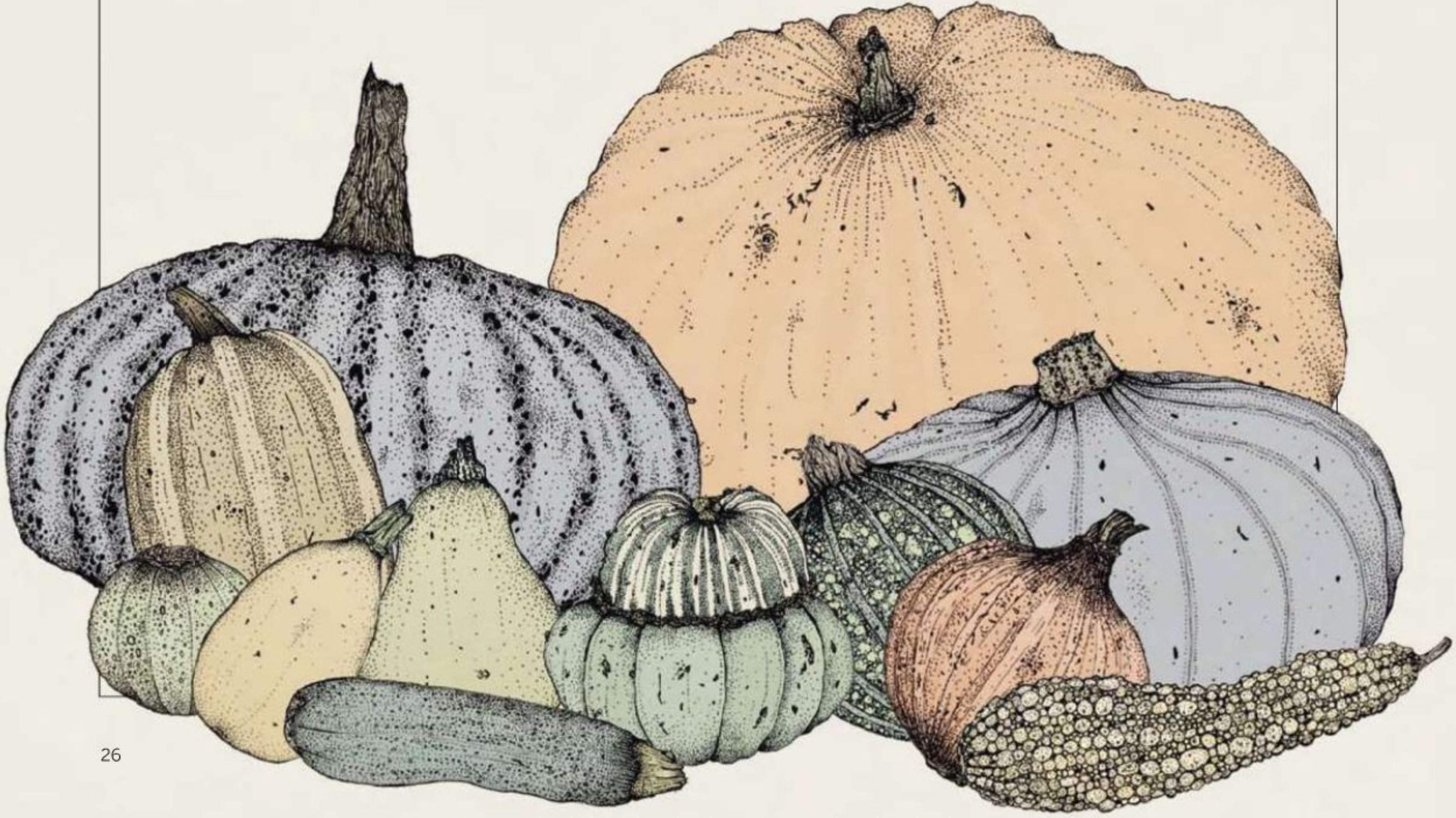
'Defender' F1 is good for organic growers – it resists disease and fruits early.

'Verde di Milano' is a small, bush-forming courgette ideal for small gardens. It can even be grown in a large pot. It has dark green, straight fruit.

'Tondo Chairo di Nizza' is a spherical courgette. It should be picked when it is roughly golf-ball sized, and can be stuffed. It has a trailing habit and can be made to climb. It needs space, though.

'Jemma' F1 has yellow fruit that look great but don't taste hugely exciting. It's prolific, though, and good for pickling.

'Rugosa Friulana' is the ugliest courgette available. It has a butter-yellow skin and lots of warty-looking bumps, but tastes divine. It's slightly firmer than normal courgettes, so it's well suited to cooking.



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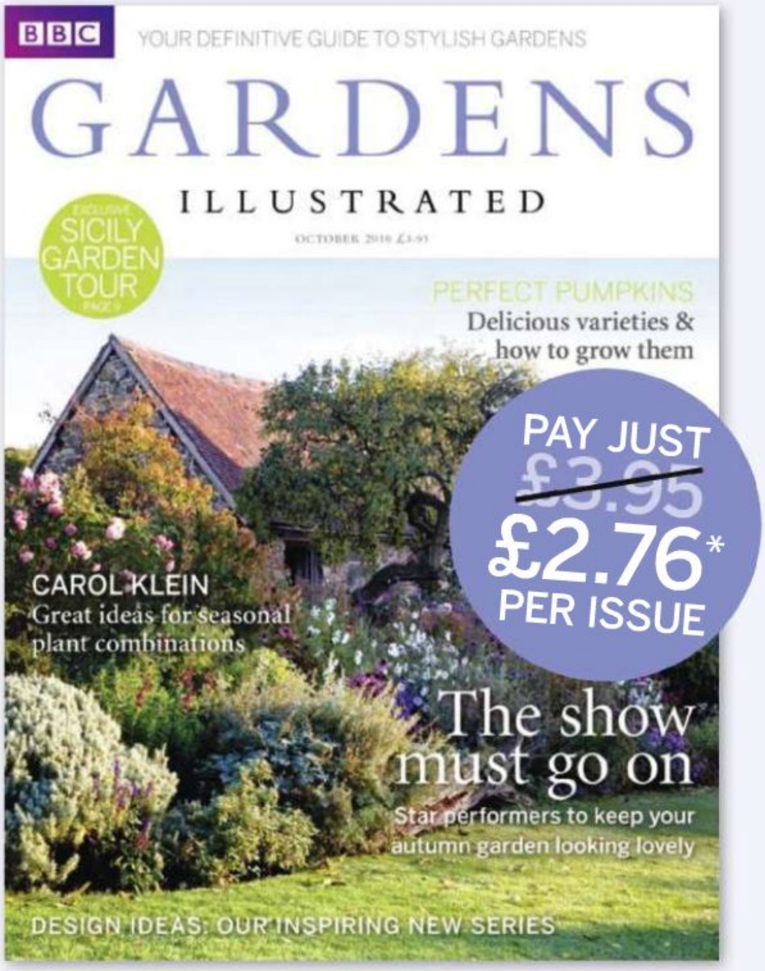
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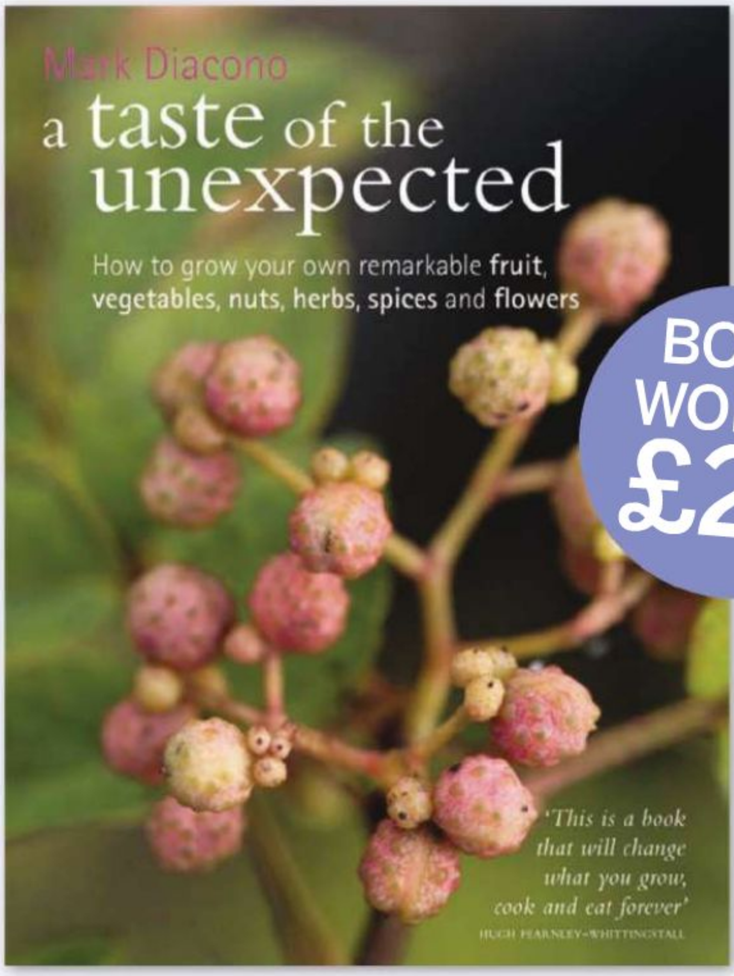
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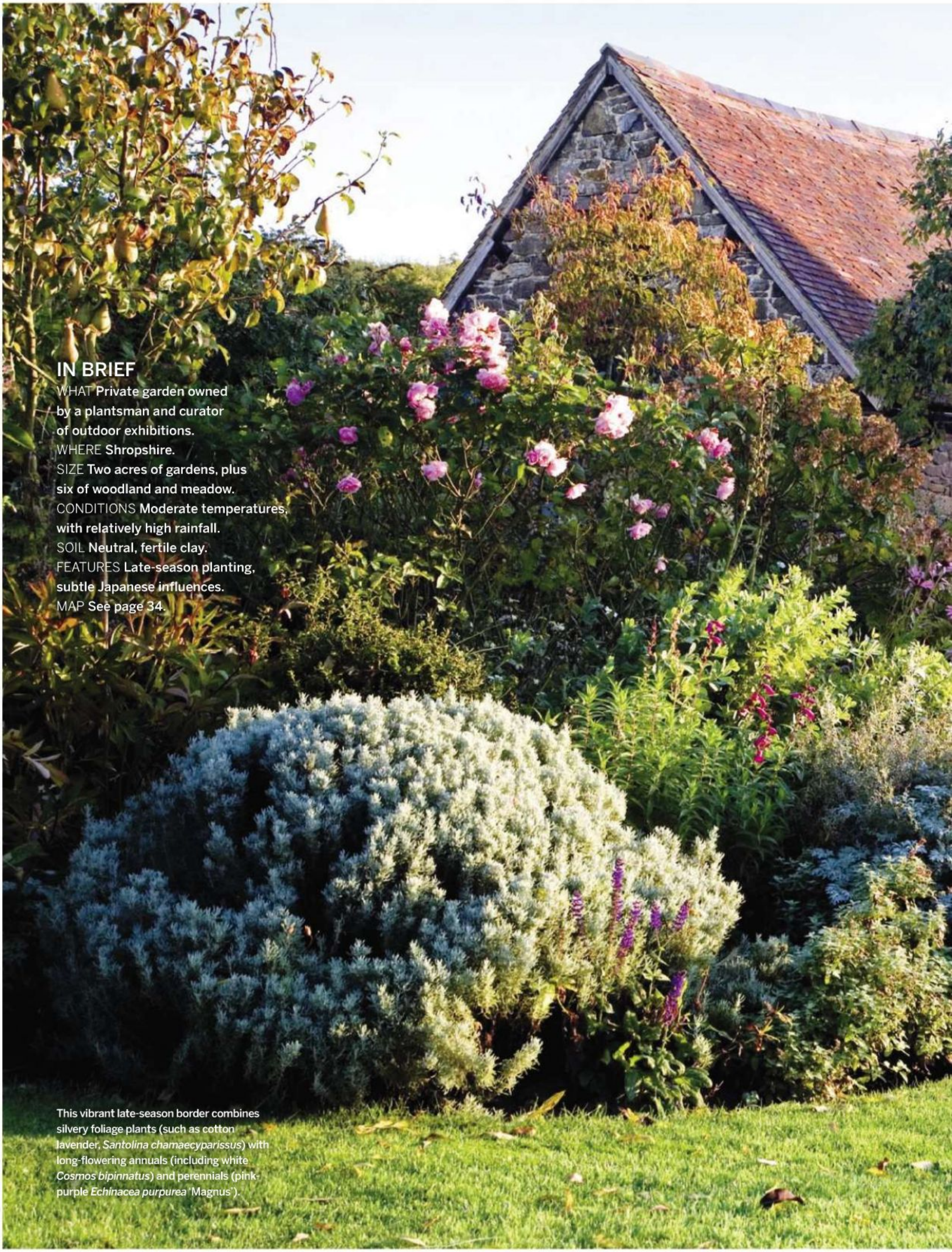
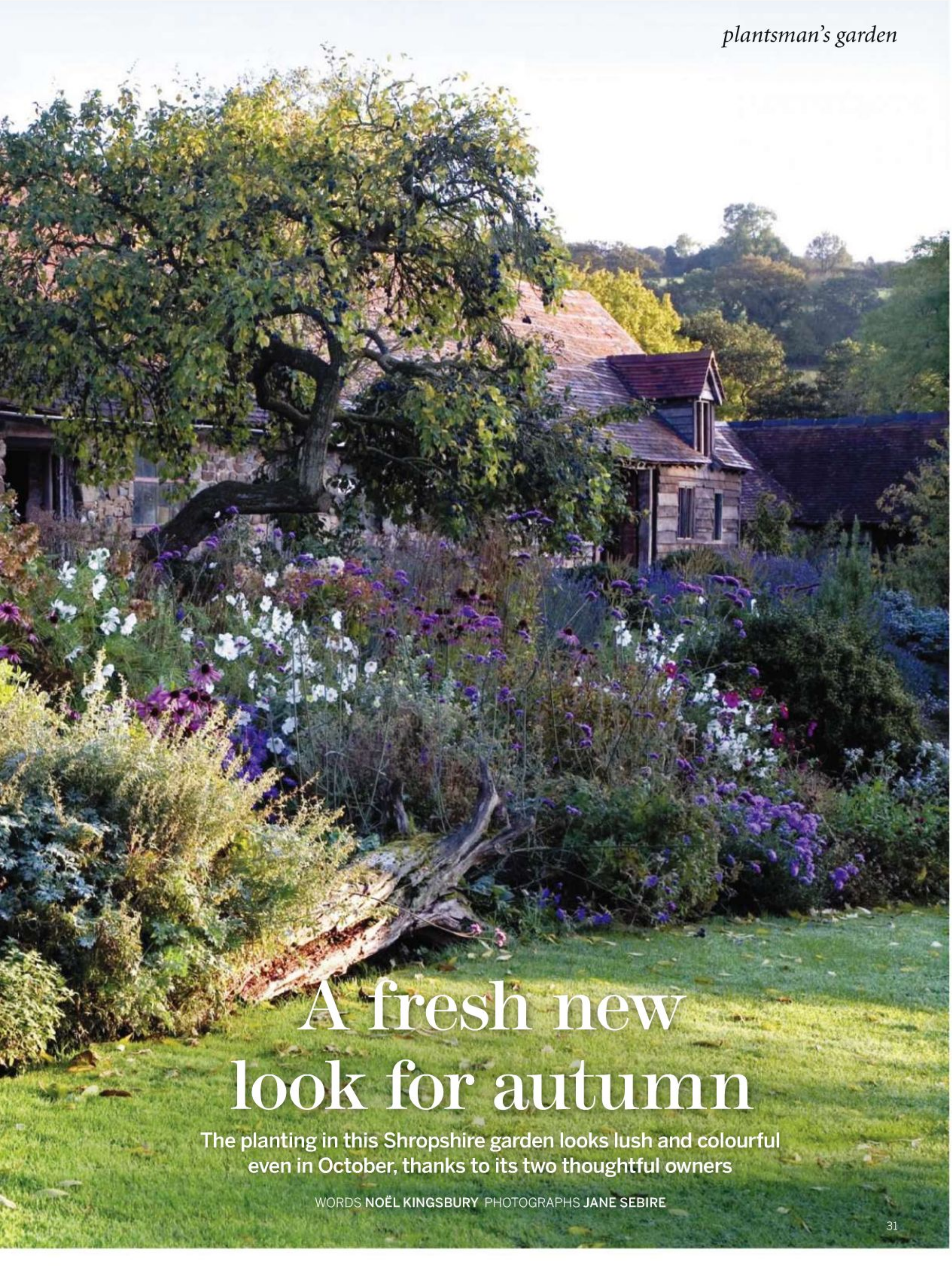


IN BRIEF

WHAT **Private garden owned by a plantsman and curator of outdoor exhibitions.**
WHERE **Shropshire.**
SIZE **Two acres of gardens, plus six of woodland and meadow.**
CONDITIONS **Moderate temperatures, with relatively high rainfall.**
SOIL **Neutral, fertile clay.**
FEATURES **Late-season planting, subtle Japanese influences.**
MAP **See page 34.**

This vibrant late-season border combines silvery foliage plants (such as cotton lavender, *Santolina chamaecyparissus*) with long-flowering annuals (including white *Cosmos bipinnatus*) and perennials (pink-purple *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus').



A fresh new look for autumn

The planting in this Shropshire garden looks lush and colourful even in October, thanks to its two thoughtful owners

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE SEBIRE**

The long border between the red-brick farmhouse and barn includes the scented, pale pink *Rosa* 'Felicia'.

The final part of the journey to Cumberley is a bit of an adventure – a steep and narrow lane to what looks like a final plunge into the undergrowth, until a turning on the right appears. The visitor emerges into a private world centred on a converted farmhouse and accompanying buildings surrounded by a richly planted garden, with distant views to the hills of Herefordshire.

Charles Chesshire, the property's owner, has a passionate love for Japanese gardens, of which more below. But in summer, the first impression is of a relaxed and luxuriant English country garden, with shrub roses billowing out along paths lined with wildflowers and perennials, of white foxgloves dotted through a framework of mature oak, ash and ancient fruit trees, and loose borders stuffed with perennials in blues and pinks. In autumn it is more obviously a plantsman's garden, with some vibrant splashes of leaf colour, the seedheads of grasses and with less competition from flowers, the eye is inevitably drawn to a wide range of elegant evergreen foliage. Flowers are still plentiful, though, with asters, late-flowering clematis cultivars and toad lilies (*Tricyrtis*) particularly prominent.

Charles made this lovely garden with his wife Anne de Charmant. She runs Meadow Arts, which puts on outdoor exhibitions of contemporary sculpture in the Welsh Borders and commissions new work. Charles has always worked as a gardener. After a course at Writtle College, and some work in garden design and nurseries, he spent a year in Saudi Arabia at a tiny nursery in the desert. After eight years in New York City and the Hamptons, he came back to manage the garden of influential plantsman John Treasure at Burford House in Worcestershire. He arrived at Cumberley in 2000.

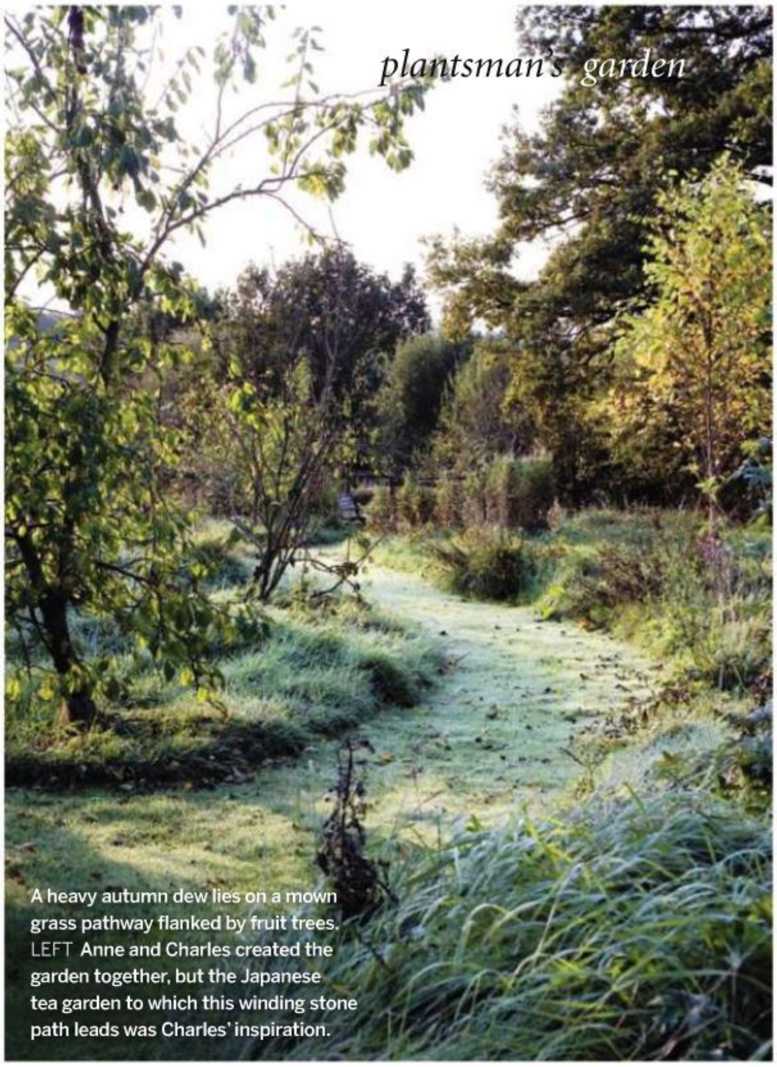
Charles reckons the 'garden' part of Cumberley occupies about two acres, but with an additional six acres of woodland and meadow, the border between the garden and the surrounding landscape is always unclear; Anne describes how "wherever you are in the garden, there are places around you that are not garden, so you go in and out of it, walking into meadow or wood."

A thinking man's garden

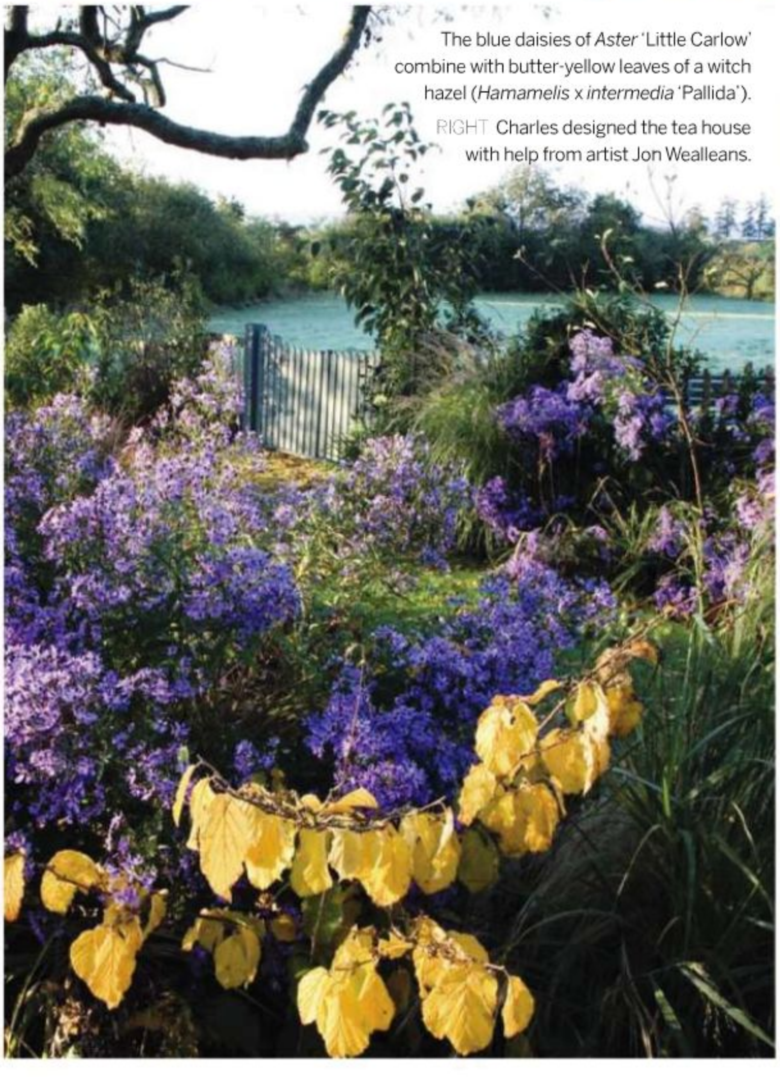
The Japanese tea garden is the heart of Cumberley. Charles first went to Japan in 2000 and has made several visits since. "I have a passion for meditation," he explains. "That is why this garden has evolved the way it has – I'm merging meditation with gardening. I wanted to see how it was possible to make a Japanese garden in England." Charles says his design reflects Japanese philosophy: a key part of the tea ceremony experience is the journey from the outside world into the spiritual one of the tea house through a meandering route. "Some paths," he says, "are long and winding,

▷

> *“I have a passion for meditation. That is why this garden has evolved the way it has – I'm merging meditation with gardening”*

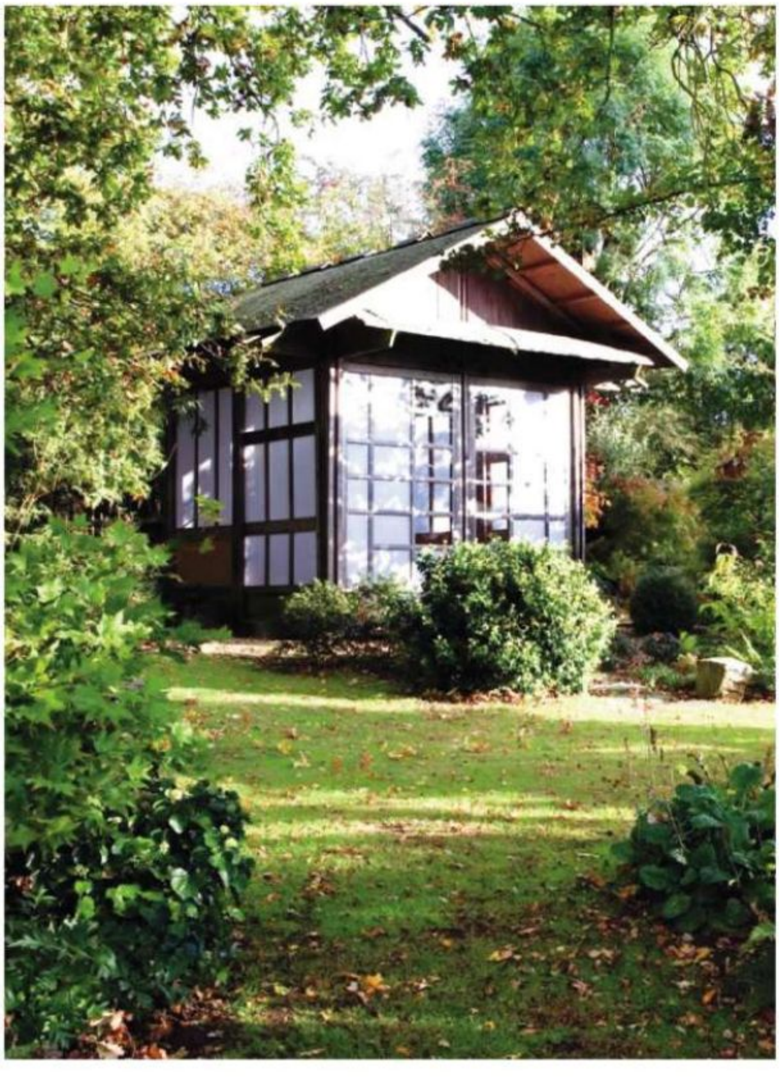


A heavy autumn dew lies on a mown grass pathway flanked by fruit trees. LEFT Anne and Charles created the garden together, but the Japanese tea garden to which this winding stone path leads was Charles' inspiration.



The blue daisies of *Aster* 'Little Carlow' combine with butter-yellow leaves of a witch hazel (*Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Pallida').

RIGHT Charles designed the tea house with help from artist Jon Wealleans.



Low sun catches the flamboyant autumn foliage of a smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria*) and the blood red blades of switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*, in the foreground).

▷ others shorter. There's one for instant enlightenment, which goes straight there."

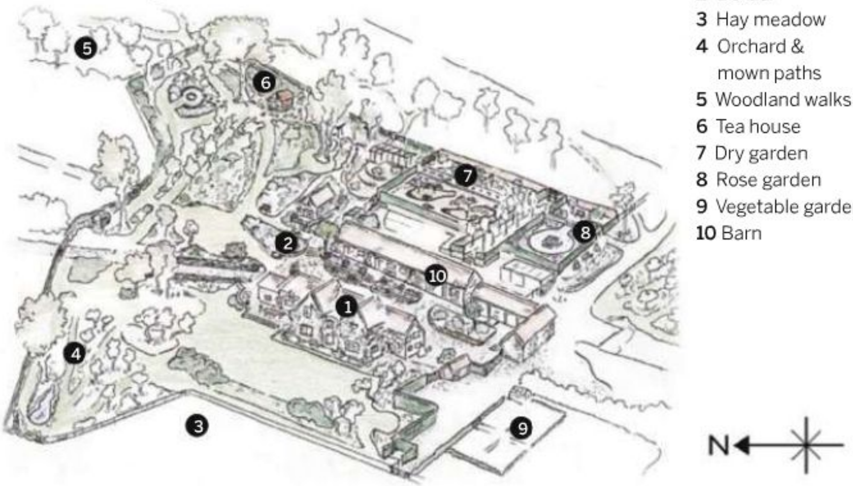
Anyone with more than a passing interest in plants will, however, make slow progress towards the tea house, for the rough stone paths are surrounded with a host of fine foliage: lace-like ferns, chunky but elegant *Polygonatum* species (Solomon's seals), bamboos, evergreen shrubs such *Aucuba*, *Drimys* and *Arbutus*. "I know I can do colour-scheming well," says Charles, "but my soul is with the ivies and the ferns, just adding little bits of colour."

The walk to the tea house is an object lesson in choosing and putting together high-quality foliage for the smaller scale. Especially prominent are several of the evergreen grass-like *Ophiopogon*, members of the lily family that are widely used in Oriental gardens.

After a lifetime of being something of a gardening nomad, Charles has now been able to spend ten years creating home. "The garden is a celebration of variety and madness and creativity," says Charles. "You can utterly lose yourself. You could even say that the garden has saved me." For all its glories, this garden is still young. Its development will be fascinating to watch. □

• Charles Chesshire's garden opens occasionally by appointment. He is also available to give talks. For more information email info@charleschesshire.co.uk

Garden plan



1 House
2 Border
3 Hay meadow
4 Orchard & mown paths
5 Woodland walks
6 Tea house
7 Dry garden
8 Rose garden
9 Vegetable garden
10 Barn

PLAN BY CHARLES CHESSIRE

Late season stars from Charles and Anna's garden

1 *Clematis* 'Bill MacKenzie'
Yellow flowers with strangely thick petals adorn a vigorous climber – good fluffy autumn seedheads, too.

2 *Fuchsia* 'Whiteknights Pearl'
This hardy, upright shrub bears showers of small, pale pink flowers.

3 *Anaphalis triplinervis*
A perennial that reaches a height of around 60cm. Its seemingly everlasting flowers shine for months.

4 *Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium'
Brilliantly coloured leaves in the autumn on a small tree that thrives in sheltered, even lightly shaded locations.

5 *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'
Deservedly the most popular of the late-season anemones, this cultivar is slow to establish but very reliable. To 1.2m.

6 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'
A 70cm high perennial with bold daisies over several months in summer.

7 *Clematis tibetana* 'Black Tibet'
A vigorous climber with dark brown rounded flowers. There are interesting clematis everywhere at Cumberley, grown as they do in nature – scrambling over shrubs and up trees. Charles loves clematis so much he has written three books on them.

8 *Selinum wallichianum*
This elegant and reliable member of the cow parsley family grows up to 1.5m tall.

9 *Tricyrtis formosana* aff. f. *glandosa* 'Blu-Shing Toad'
Heavily spotted pink flowers atop 60cm stems; good in moist shade.

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In brief

WHAT **Landscape garden, mixing formal and wild elements.**

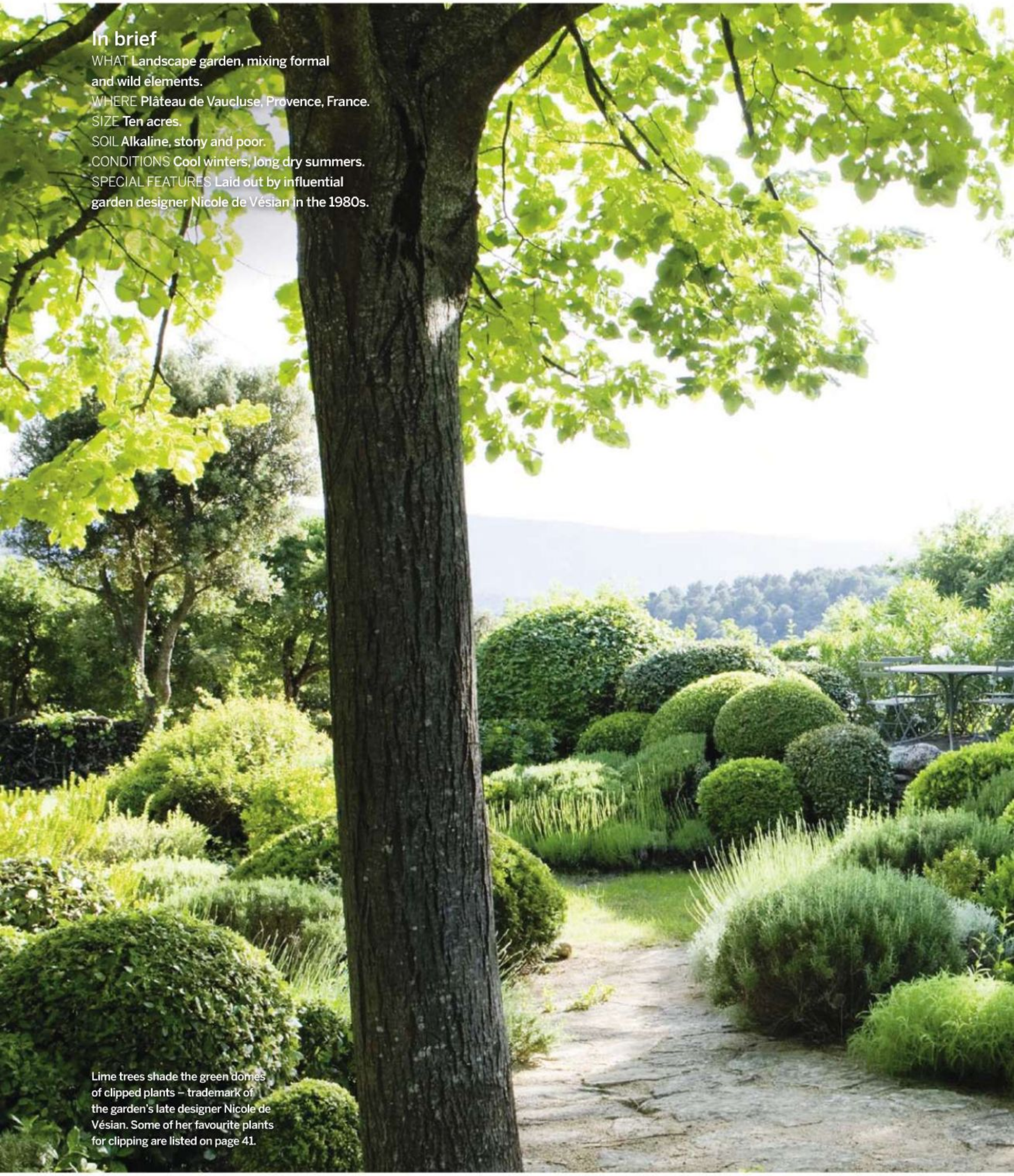
WHERE **Plâteau de Vaucluse, Provence, France.**

SIZE **Ten acres.**

SOIL **Alkaline, stony and poor.**

CONDITIONS **Cool winters, long dry summers.**

SPECIAL FEATURES **Laid out by influential garden designer Nicole de Vésian in the 1980s.**

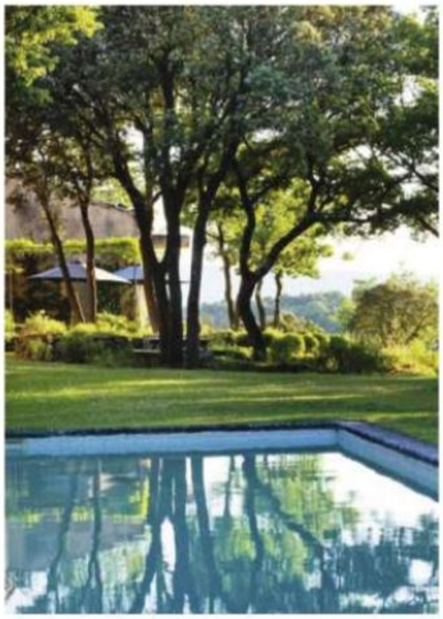


Lime trees shade the green domes of clipped plants – trademark of the garden's late designer Nicole de Vésian. Some of her favourite plants for clipping are listed on page 41.

A clifftop retreat

Set on a ridge overlooking the Luberon hills, the idyllic garden of retired professors Daniel and Michèle is as effortlessly natural as the landscape that surrounds it

WORDS **LOUISA JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLIVE NICHOLS**



Nicole de Vésian, designer of the iconic garden 'La Louve' in Provence, loved the Luberon hills, a rugged limestone ridge sheltering picturesque hill towns, grottoes and one of France's richest wildlife reserves. In the late 1980s, while working on her own garden, she began a small design business. Her first clients were French, a couple of professors taking early retirement after a long stint in the US.

Daniel and Michèle 'M' still live and garden year round on this steep slope tucked behind a medieval village. They began by building a Californian ranch-style house on a small plateau, with views overlooking valleys on almost all sides. It has huge picture windows. "Luminosity means a lot to me," says Michèle, "and we wanted to be surrounded by all this natural beauty."

Holm oak, downy oak and Aleppo pines had been long encroaching on crumbled dry stone terracing that had once supported vineyards and a cherry orchard, now reverted to meadow land rich with spring flowers. Bits of ancient stonework, including three of the vaulted stone huts locally called *bories*, emerge here and there, much of it blending imperceptibly with natural stone outcrops.

Blending in to the landscape

Vésian was first asked to 'edit' the existing landscape – to open up views and frame its best features. She began with the house, "very comfortable to live in," explains Michèle, "but without much charm." On Vésian's advice, a glass front door was put in opposite the picture windows. This creates crossed perspectives indoors connecting with those outside.

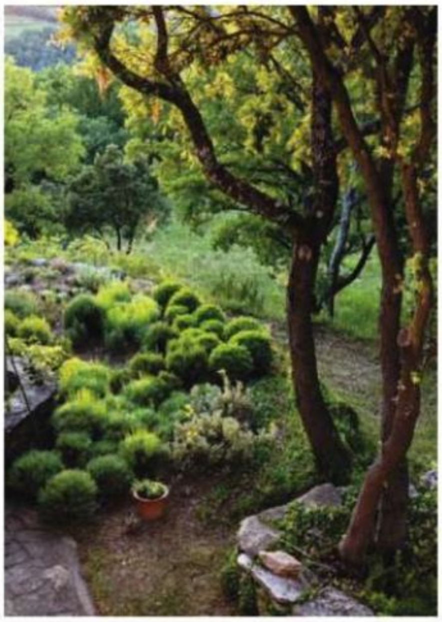
Next, on this wide open site, some screening was needed. Vésian designed a stone wall at right angles to the cypress-lined drive to hide the house almost entirely from visitors as they arrive. Michèle remembers with affection Nicole directing the mason:

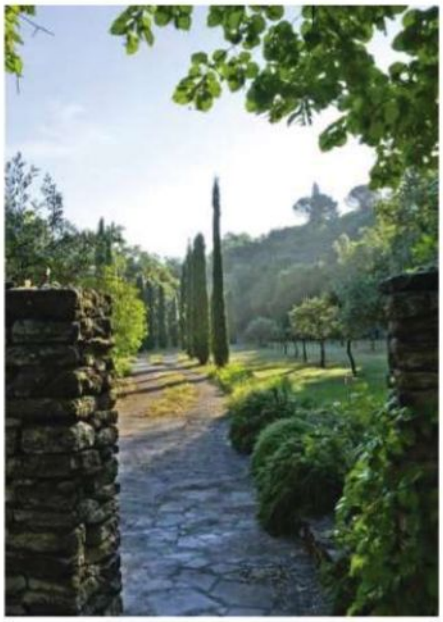
THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT Terraces and sitting areas are dotted around the garden; this one is cool and shady on summer mornings.

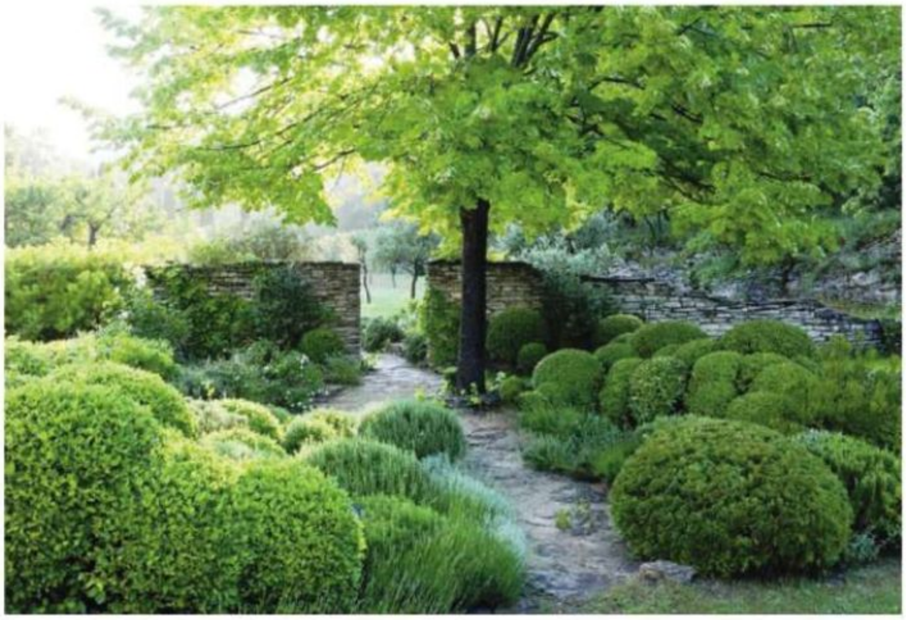
TOP RIGHT Slender, bent stems of holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) reflect in the swimming pool.

RIGHT The land falls steeply away from the garden on the north side of the house.

FAR RIGHT A drive leads from the garden to the village through an avenue of cypresses.







THIS PAGE, LEFT The drystone wall enclosing this part of the garden was deliberately designed to look old.

BELOW LEFT A traditional *borie* near the edge of the grounds was probably once a sheepfold.

BELOW RIGHT Holm oak, downy oak (*Quercus pubescens*) and Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) fringe meadows speckled with wildflowers.

"She wanted it to look just like the ruined walls nearby, using stone found here and there on the property. But the workman, proud of his skills, wanted it perfect and spanking new. She stood over him and kept getting him to change this stone and that. Now it looks as if it had always been there."

Beyond this wall you now discover the house rising from layered mounds and globes of clipped greenery, the kind of small-scaled plant tapestry for which Vésian became famous. It looks easy, but imitators find that a fine eye is needed to judge proportions and balance. Each plant keeps its own character.

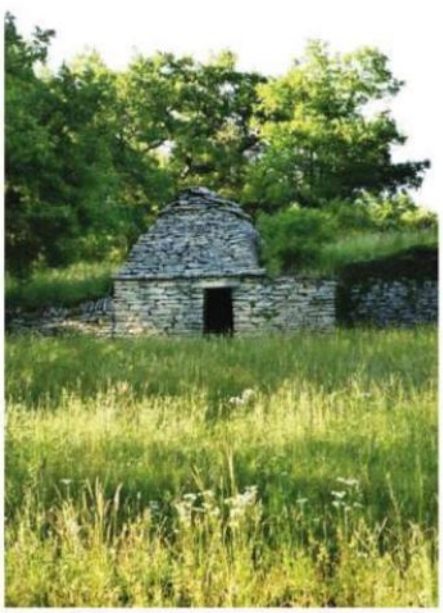
> *“The careful shaping of mature holm oaks... makes a perfect transition from the tapestries to the valley vistas beyond”*

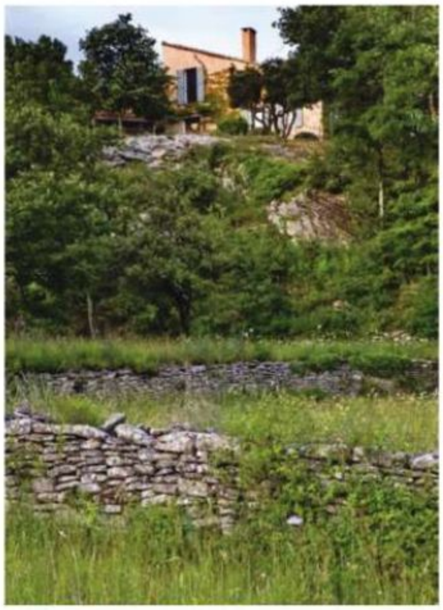
Many of these species grow wild nearby, creating the kind of dynamic link Vésian loved between pruned and spontaneous shapes. Michèle had already discovered a natural box grove (*Buxus sempervirens*) further down the hill. She still digs up seedlings there for new projects.

Meadows and old trees

To the west and north, where the land slopes steeply down from the house, Vésian's main task was to thin the oak and pine woodland. Some trees were removed, others rounded to bring out their natural growth habit.

The careful shaping of mature holm oaks, trunks and crowns makes a perfect transition from the tapestries to the valley vistas beyond. As you walk through the landscape, you can touch the bark and look through foliage in dappled light while admiring the shape of another grove against the cliff face beyond. ▷





> *“Daniel and Michèle continue working in the Vésian spirit. This is a garden for living, not a museum”*

▷ One of Vésian’s great gifts was her ability to combine intimate plantings with middle ground and distant perspectives, all of equal interest, changing as you move but always balanced. Harmonies of volume, muted colours and rough textures, of full and empty space, begin right under your nose (and appeal by their fragrance), then lead the eye and the feet further on. There are many viewpoints, invitations to sit or continue and enjoy fresh angles of vision, to discover new details. The whole site is like a huge, kinetic sculpture.

Vésian never made plans: “I never draw, I never measure,” she said proudly. When it came to thinning the lower woodland, she simply walked round the property with the owners and tied a string around the trees she wanted felled. Daniel and Michèle remember with some indulgence her tricks for getting their consent. Near the house they had planted a malingering tree where Vésian wanted empty space. Daniel resisted. Vésian presented him with a picture of the tree on which she had written: ‘In memoriam’. He gave in.

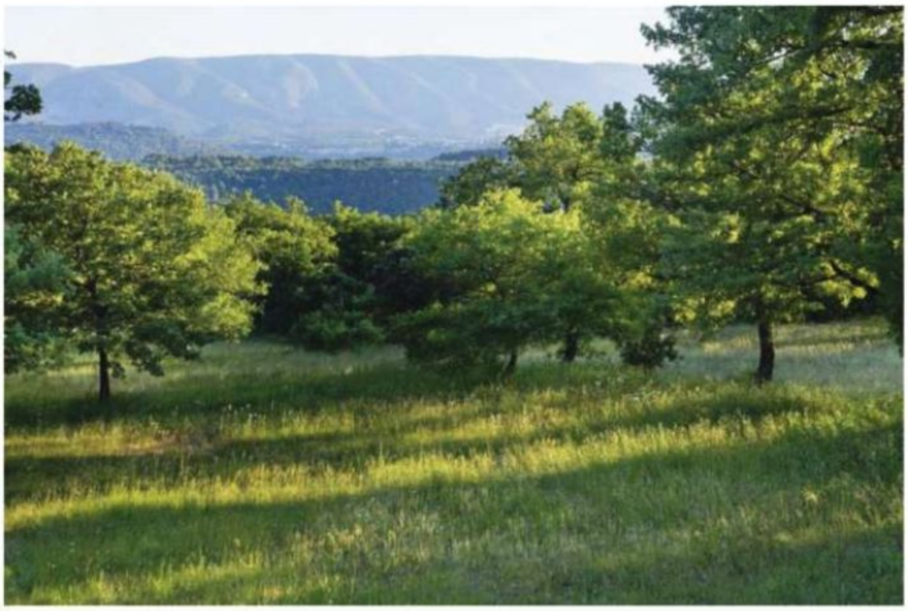
Daniel and Michèle continue working in the Vésian spirit. This is a garden for living, not a museum. He recently cleared a big boulder, leaving only a blanket of wild savory and one sentinel pine. They do little new planting, but Michèle is experimenting with perovskias and shrubby germanders on the north side of the house. They have the occasional help of two gardeners who have an artistic eye and a fine hand for pruning the holm oaks.

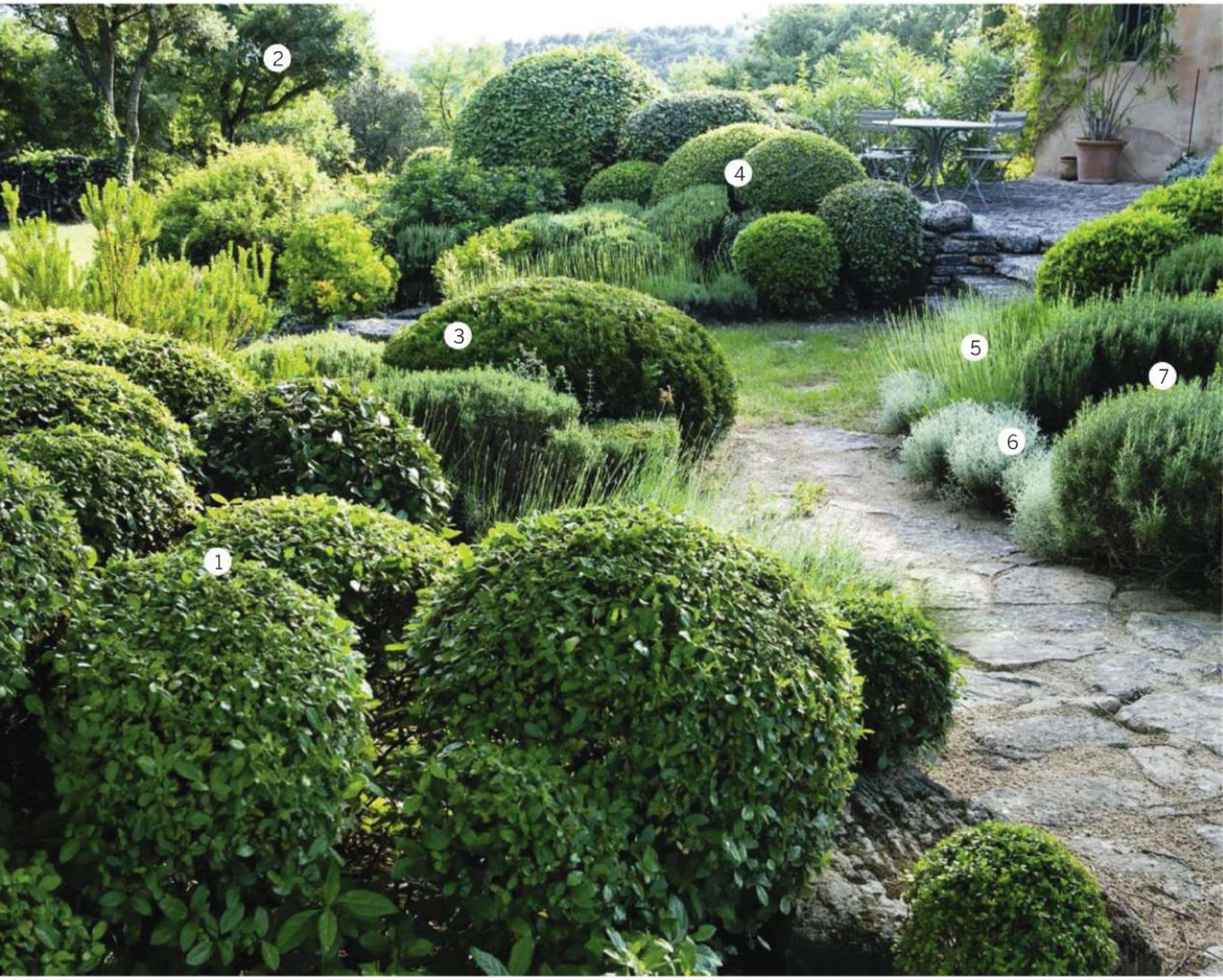
Thanks to the good start that Nicole de Vésian provided, they have lived in peace for many years in these old fields and woodland, practicing landscape art on a grand as well as intimate scale. □

TOP LEFT Holm oaks pruned into dramatic shapes help to blend the relative order of the garden into the managed wildness of the landscape beyond. A Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) softens the appearance of the house.

TOP RIGHT The house lies at the top of a hill, above limestone cliffs and terraces retained with drystone walls, where vineyards and cherry trees once grew.

RIGHT The hills of the Luberon loom on the horizon, beyond meadows shaded by young trees.





10 'clippable' plants

Nicole de Vésian grew 'shaped' plants together in a range of textures and colours, from silver to dark green. Here are ten of her favourites

1 *Viburnum tinus*
This common local species, known as laurustinus, is tolerant of drought and poor soil. Tough, medium-sized foliage can be clipped to any size without damage. Hardy.

2 *Quercus ilex*
Holm oak is the defining tree of this landscape, often multi-trunked and wind-bent. It makes natural sculpture alone or in groves, can be clipped into domes and cloud patterns or pollarded to keep it bushy. It's slow-growing but tough.

3 *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'
This plant from China and Japan is useful for its tough, evergreen foliage. It's not fully hardy but should tolerate some frosty weather. It may be clipped, but has a natural, mounded habit.

4 *Buxus sempervirens*
Common box is another species that grows wild in Provence. It turns rust-coloured in cold winters. Fine-textured foliage can be kept clipped to most sizes or shapes; unclipped it grows up to 4m tall.

5 *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'
This dwarf lavender flowers early and stays compact if clipped after flowering. Prune back as hard as you can without going into old, woody growth.

6 *Santolina chamaecyparissus*
Cotton lavender has scented, silvery foliage that naturally forms a mound. It benefits from clipping twice a year, or it may become leggy and sprawling; parts of it may die back, so it's best not used in mass plantings. Frost-hardy (down to -5°C).

7 *Rosmarinus officinalis*
Rosemary is a tough, scented plant. Many cultivars are available, often with distinct growing habits. Most need clipping to stay compact.

8 *Teucrium fruticans*
(Not shown.) Silver germander is a small, frost-hardy shrub native to other parts of the Mediterranean. It flowers in winter in shades of blue. Its maximum height is about 1.2m. It's clippable, but its natural fountain shape complements mounds well.

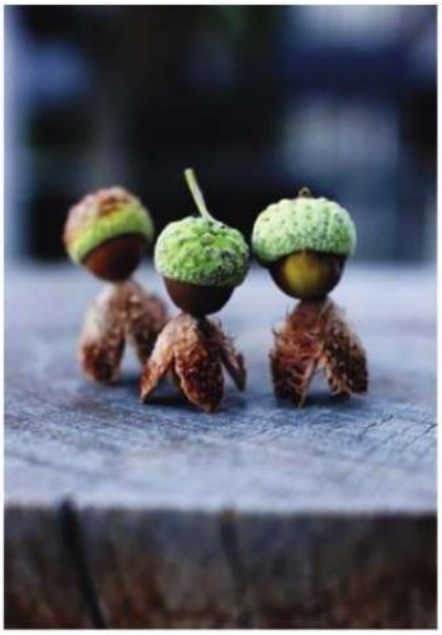
9 *Convolvulus cneorum*
(Not shown.) A Mediterranean native, silverbush is a low-growing (60 cm), naturally shaped silvery mound, not usually clipped because it fits fitting easily into plant 'tapestries' in its natural form.

10 *Elaeagnus x ebbingei*
(Not shown.) Vésian loved the silvery undersides of its leaves (the closest she could find to her beloved beige in plants). Its small flowers give off an intoxicating scent in October. Infinitely adaptable to clipping.

Bright ideas for autumn decorations

Make the most of a sunny day to forage for pretty, natural treasures and use them to make lovely, rustic decorations for your home

WORDS ANNEMARIE JAKOBSEN & INGER SKAARUP PHOTOGRAPHS CHRISTIAN PETERSEN



Forest fairies

◁ These charming fairies make sweet little table decorations. Set them in groups on large golden leaves, or place a single fairy at each place setting.

MATERIALS
- fresh green acorns
- cupules of common beech – the woody shells of beech nuts
- glue or hot-glue gun

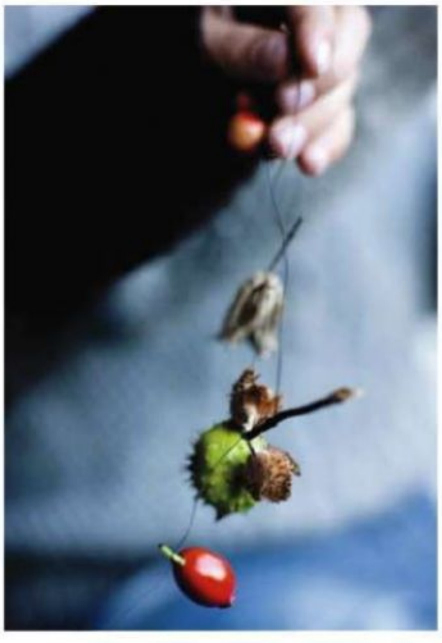
Place a small dab of glue on the stem of a beech cupule. Push the stem into the acorn and set aside until glue is dry.

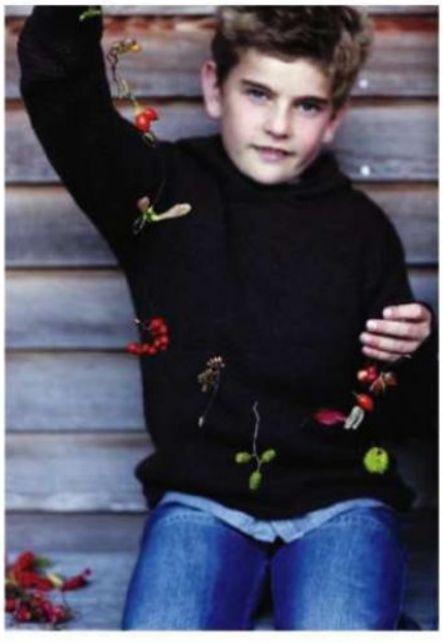
Autumn garland

▷ A garland is a simple way to display rosehips, leaves, seedpods, chestnuts, the black cones of the common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and rowan berries (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Hang the garland where the many tiny details of the things on it can be studied up close – from hooks or hangers, on cupboards and mirrors, or in windows.

MATERIALS
- rosehips, leaves, seedpods etc – preferably things with a small stem still attached
- medium-gauge floral wire
- scissors

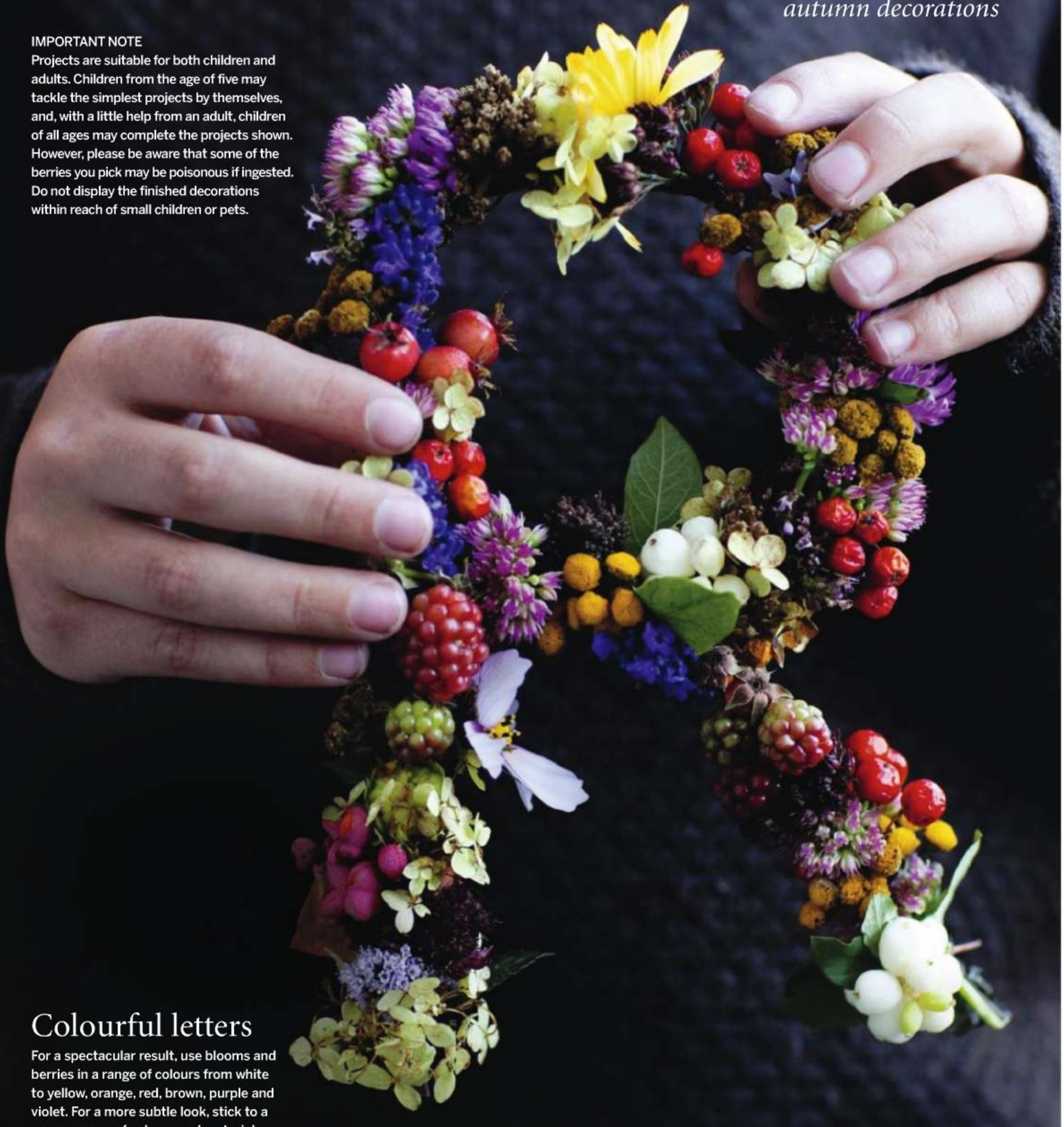
Secure the things you have collected by wrapping floral wire around the stems. Some things, such as seedpods with brittle stems, stem-less rosehips and large berries, may be threaded directly on to the floral wire. Cut the floral wire when the garland reaches the desired length, leaving a wire end for hanging.





IMPORTANT NOTE

Projects are suitable for both children and adults. Children from the age of five may tackle the simplest projects by themselves, and, with a little help from an adult, children of all ages may complete the projects shown. However, please be aware that some of the berries you pick may be poisonous if ingested. Do not display the finished decorations within reach of small children or pets.



Colourful letters

For a spectacular result, use blooms and berries in a range of colours from white to yellow, orange, red, brown, purple and violet. For a more subtle look, stick to a narrow range of colours and materials – say, an assortment of berries and small leaves in shades of gold and amber. Use the letters on doors and tables or give as a gift. They are long-lasting and dry beautifully.

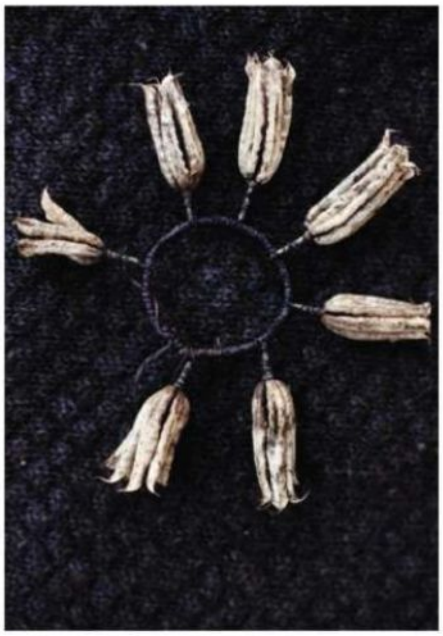
MATERIALS
- pencil
- paper
- wire
- wire cutters
- green or brown floral tape
- flowers, seedpods, berries and leaves
- garden shears
- thin-gauge floral wire

Using the pencil, draw a letter on a piece of paper. With the wire cutters, cut a piece of wire and shape it into the letter, using the drawing as a guide. Wrap wire ends together to secure and trim, if necessary. Wrap floral tape around the wire to prevent the small bouquets from slipping as they are attached later.

Sort the natural materials and cut large berry or flower clusters into smaller pieces.

Gather a small bouquet of the materials and place at the top of the letter. Secure by wrapping with thin-gauge floral wire around the stems. Gather another bouquet and place close to the first bouquet. Secure as before, then continue until the letter is completely covered.

When densely covered with berries, flowers and foliage, the decoration stays attractive and rich in detail even as it dries.



Seedpod circles

◁ Hang one or more of these graphic circles in a window. Use black thread – it is almost invisible, so the decorations seem to float. They can also be used as napkin rings or other table decorations, depending on the size and shape of the seedpods.

MATERIALS

- medium-gauge floral wire
- wire cutters
- brown floral tape
- brown thin-gauge floral wire
- dry seedpods such as aguilegias (pictured)

Cut a piece of medium-gauge floral wire and shape it into a ring about 4cm in diameter. Wrap floral tape around the wire to prevent the seedpods from slipping as they are attached later. Trim the seedpods' stems to a length of about 1cm. Cut a small piece of thin-gauge floral wire and carefully wrap one end around the stem of a seedpod. Use the other end to attach it to the wire ring. Repeat, spacing the seedpods evenly around the ring.

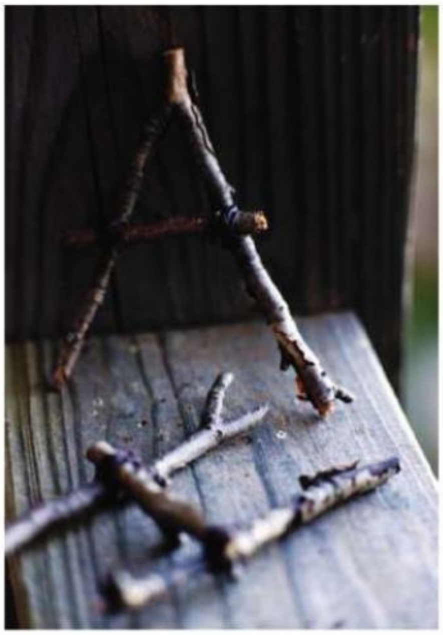
Rustic alphabet

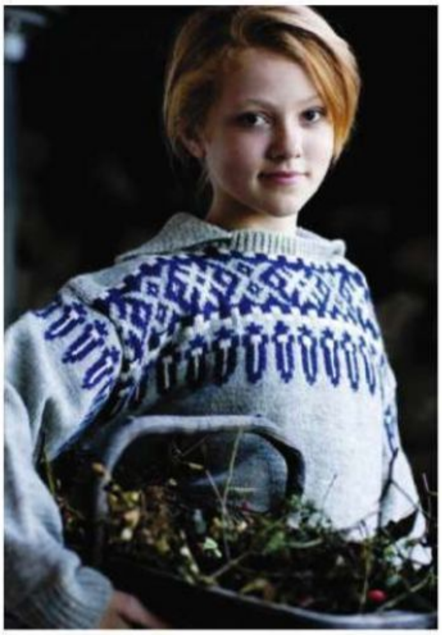
▷ These twig letters are particularly fun for children who are just learning the alphabet. Use them to study the letters' unique shapes, for word games or to spell out words.

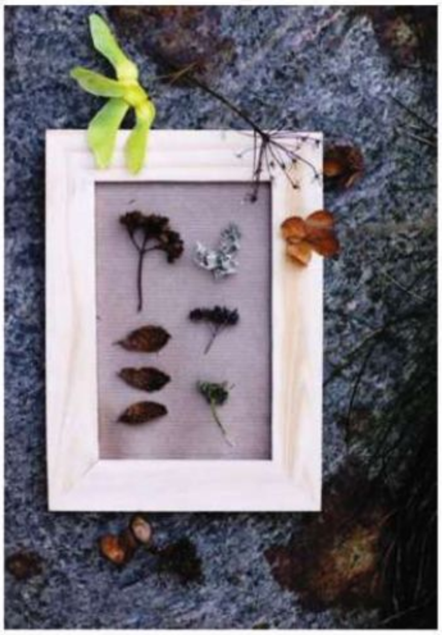
MATERIALS

- twigs
- garden shears or secateurs
- medium-gauge floral wire
- wire snips

Cut the twigs into pieces roughly 15cm long. Look for some with shapes that can be used for whole or partial letters. A symmetrical branching point can be used as a 'V' or to make an 'A'. Bent sticks can help make an 'O'. Where sticks cross, fix them together with small pieces of medium-gauge floral wire.







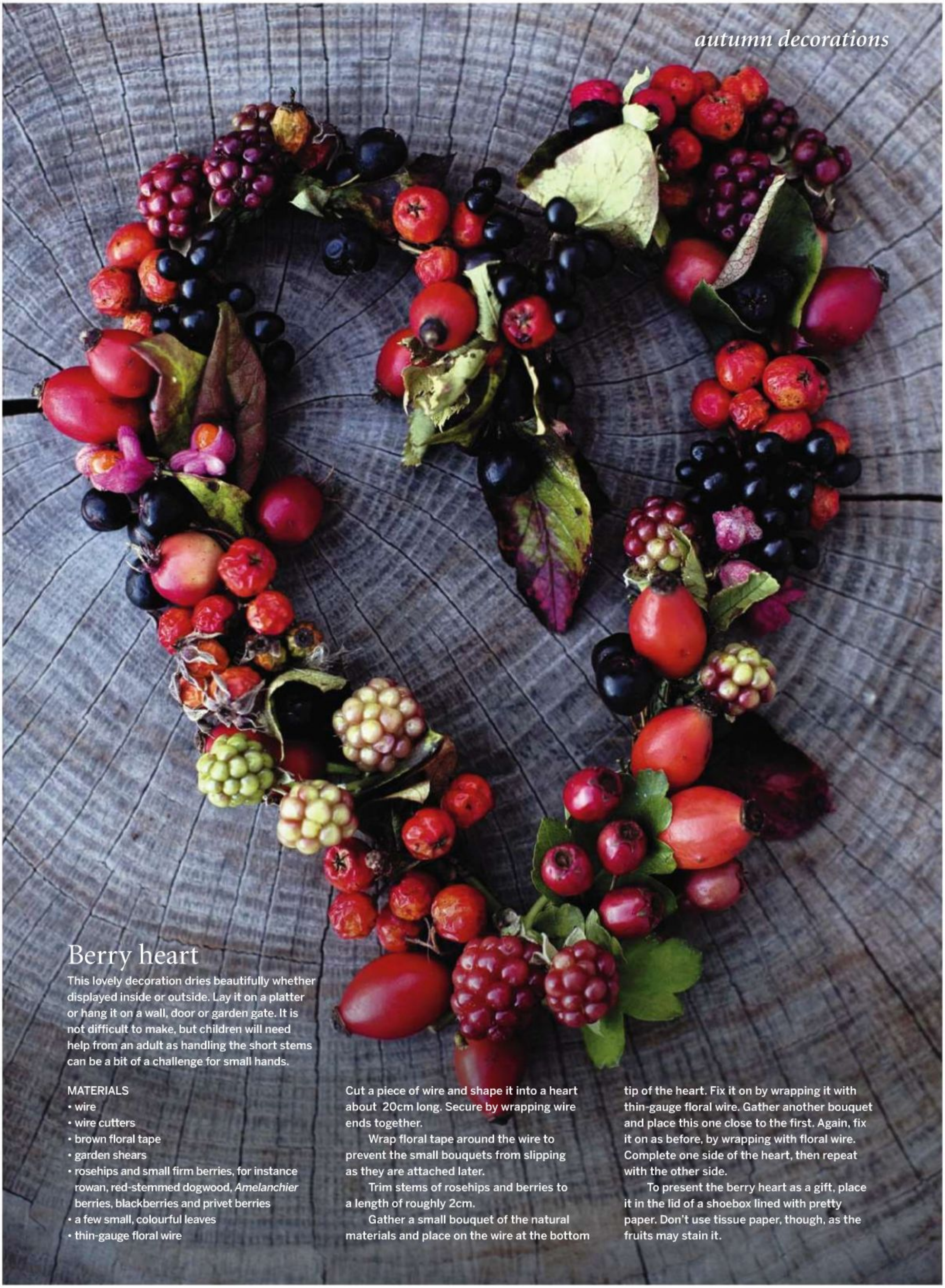
Nature collage

◁ Arrange interesting objects in a picture frame. Dry them first – either hang them in a warm room with good air circulation, or dry flat between thick layers of newspaper. Put something heavy on top and leave for about 10 days.

MATERIALS

- picture frame with glass
- piece of cardboard
- scissors
- small objects such as moss, lichen, leaves or flowers, dried
- glue or hot-glue gun

Cut the cardboard to fit the size of the frame. Arrange the objects on the cardboard and glue them down. Keep the frame flat until the glue is dry. Carefully place cardboard in the frame, behind glass.



Berry heart

This lovely decoration dries beautifully whether displayed inside or outside. Lay it on a platter or hang it on a wall, door or garden gate. It is not difficult to make, but children will need help from an adult as handling the short stems can be a bit of a challenge for small hands.

MATERIALS

- wire
- wire cutters
- brown floral tape
- garden shears
- rosehips and small firm berries, for instance rowan, red-stemmed dogwood, *Amelanchier* berries, blackberries and privet berries
- a few small, colourful leaves
- thin-gauge floral wire

Cut a piece of wire and shape it into a heart about 20cm long. Secure by wrapping wire ends together.

Wrap floral tape around the wire to prevent the small bouquets from slipping as they are attached later.

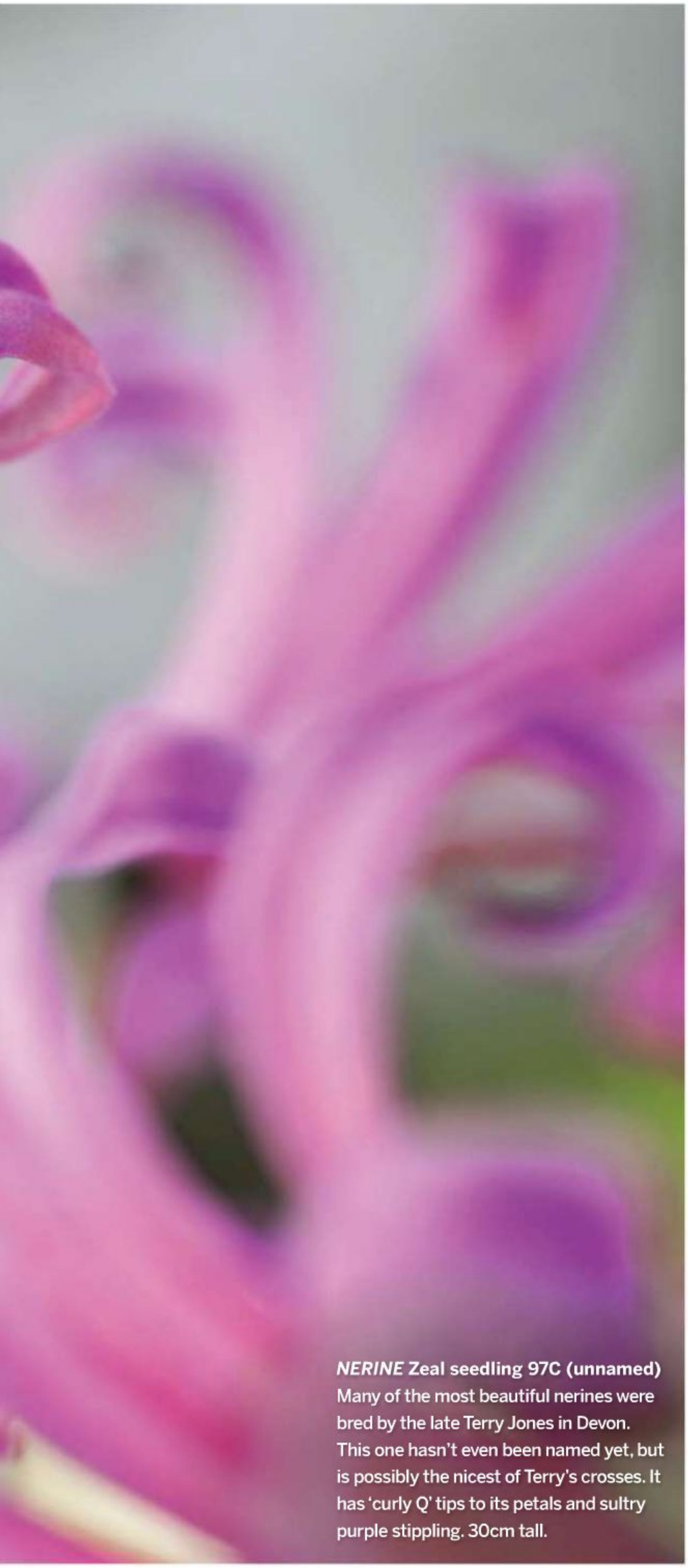
Trim stems of rosehips and berries to a length of roughly 2cm.

Gather a small bouquet of the natural materials and place on the wire at the bottom tip of the heart. Fix it on by wrapping it with thin-gauge floral wire. Gather another bouquet and place this one close to the first. Again, fix it on as before, by wrapping with floral wire. Complete one side of the heart, then repeat with the other side.

To present the berry heart as a gift, place it in the lid of a shoebox lined with pretty paper. Don't use tissue paper, though, as the fruits may stain it.

In brief

WHAT **Bulbous perennials.**
SIZE **Between 30cm and 1m.**
CONDITIONS **Some are hardy, others best grown indoors. Full sun, poor soil.**
SEASON **Most nerines flower between September and November.**
ORIGINS **A wide range of habitats from boggy swamps to slopes, meadows and rock ledges in southern Africa.**



NERINE Zeal seedling 97C (unnamed) Many of the most beautiful nerines were bred by the late Terry Jones in Devon. This one hasn't even been named yet, but is possibly the nicest of Terry's crosses. It has 'curly Q' tips to its petals and sultry purple stippling. 30cm tall.

Nerines

Don't get the autumn blues – cheer yourself up with a generous splash of brilliant colour in your garden, courtesy of these sunny African plants

WORDS CAROL KLEIN CAPTIONS MATT BISHOP
PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Carol Klein is a plantswoman, nursery owner and presenter of BBC gardening programmes

Just as you feel you have to throw in the trowel or at least submit to the waves of serious russet, wound-down brown and muted orange sweeping over countryside and garden, along come a bunch of funsters looking for a party, all dressed up in their prettiest frocks and brightest make-up.

Nerines are some of the most show-stopping flowers we can grow. True, since they flower so late in the year, through September, October and non-stop into November, they are bound to be noticed more than they would (were they to flower) in the midst of midsummer's melee. They would create a stir, though, even at the gayest summer garden party, wearing fluorescent pinks and incandescent corals in showy silks and sexy satins.

Nerines have a multifarious fan club. Some of the best and most serious plantspeople in the world have devoted themselves to their culture and hybridization. Former MP Sir Peter Smithers displayed his treasured collection of *Nerine sarniensis* cultivars against a specially sapphire-painted wall on the balcony of his house overlooking Lake Lugano, where friends were invited to judge the most beautiful. Yet in Devon, *Nerine bowdenii* has a more humble profile as a cottage garden plant. It is often a feature of local cottage plots here, where proud gardeners take great pride in clumps of the bulbs that in some cases were planted by ▷

Propagation

BY SEED

Some nerines set seed quite freely. Wait until the fat, rounded seed capsule is bursting and extract the seed, sowing straight into pots or trays of loam-based compost mixed with washed sand. Lightly cover with more compost and water well, using a fine rose. Keep in a lightly shaded place (under the greenhouse bench is perfect). Water again only when the first leaves appear.

Station-sowing seed individually in modules is a good idea, too, because there will be no root disturbance when it is time to pot them on.

BY OFFSETS

The other easy way to make more bulbs is to remove offsets. Both in the garden and in pots, bulbs may produce offsets or side bulbs joined initially to the mother bulb. When these offsets can be eased away (never be brutal for fear of damaging the basal plate of both mother and child), gently remove them and line them out in a protected part of the garden or, ideally, pot them up individually in loam-based compost mixed with washed sand. Don't let the roots dry out or bulbs may shrivel. Water immediately and thoroughly and then only when compost becomes dry.

> *"I can remember, when we first came to Devon, being enchanted by these flowers, offered for sale in marketplaces"*

▷ grandparents long ago. I can remember when we first came to Devon, being enchanted by these flowers, offered for sale in marketplaces, sitting alongside late apples and fresh-gathered wild mushrooms. Their glorious iridescent flowers kept happily in water for a week or more, gay and glamorous, the last vestige of summer while the leaves of the beech trees began to adopt their autumn garb.

From Africa to Devon

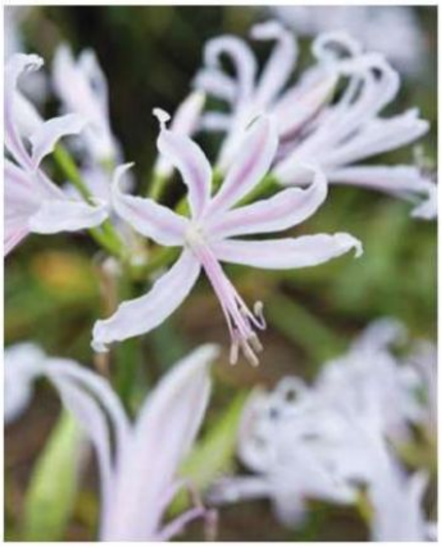
Nerines come from southern Africa and are well represented in South Africa itself. There are about 30 species, although only a few are generally cultivated. Those most widely grown in the UK are *N. bowdenii*, *N. sarniensis* (mainly its many cultivars), *N. undulata* (below), *N. flexuosa* 'Alba' and *N. filifolia*, probably in that order of popularity.

Nerine bowdenii is the only reliably hardy species, coming as it does from 3,000m up in the Drakensberg mountains. Even so, this last hard winter has set back and even killed well-established clumps of *N. bowdenii*. Once you have grown it, though, you will want to try again; its sparkling flowers, borne up to nine or so to a stem, have slender, reflexed petals that are slightly frilly at their edges; and it flowers prolifically.

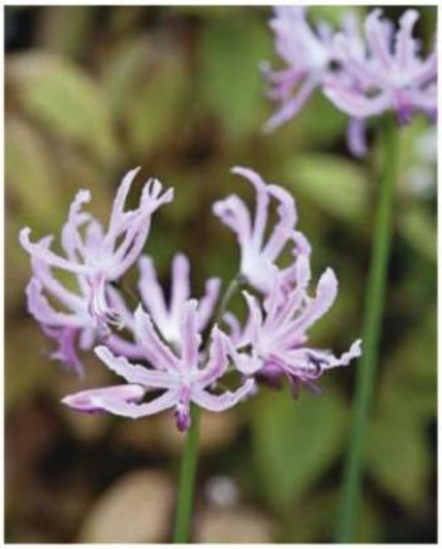
As with most nerines, anthers and stigma protrude, thrusting themselves forwards and upwards in the same way as many lilies. The petals are the lure but there is no way to them without encountering pollen-bearing anthers and sticky stigmas.

Flamboyant new forms

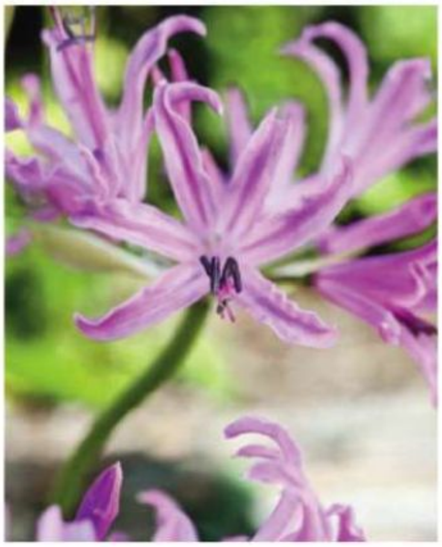
The iridescence of nerines is startling and intriguing at first sight, for the flowers sparkle with an almost crystalline shimmer. Though the hardiest species and cultivars are decidedly pink, among the so-called jewel ▷



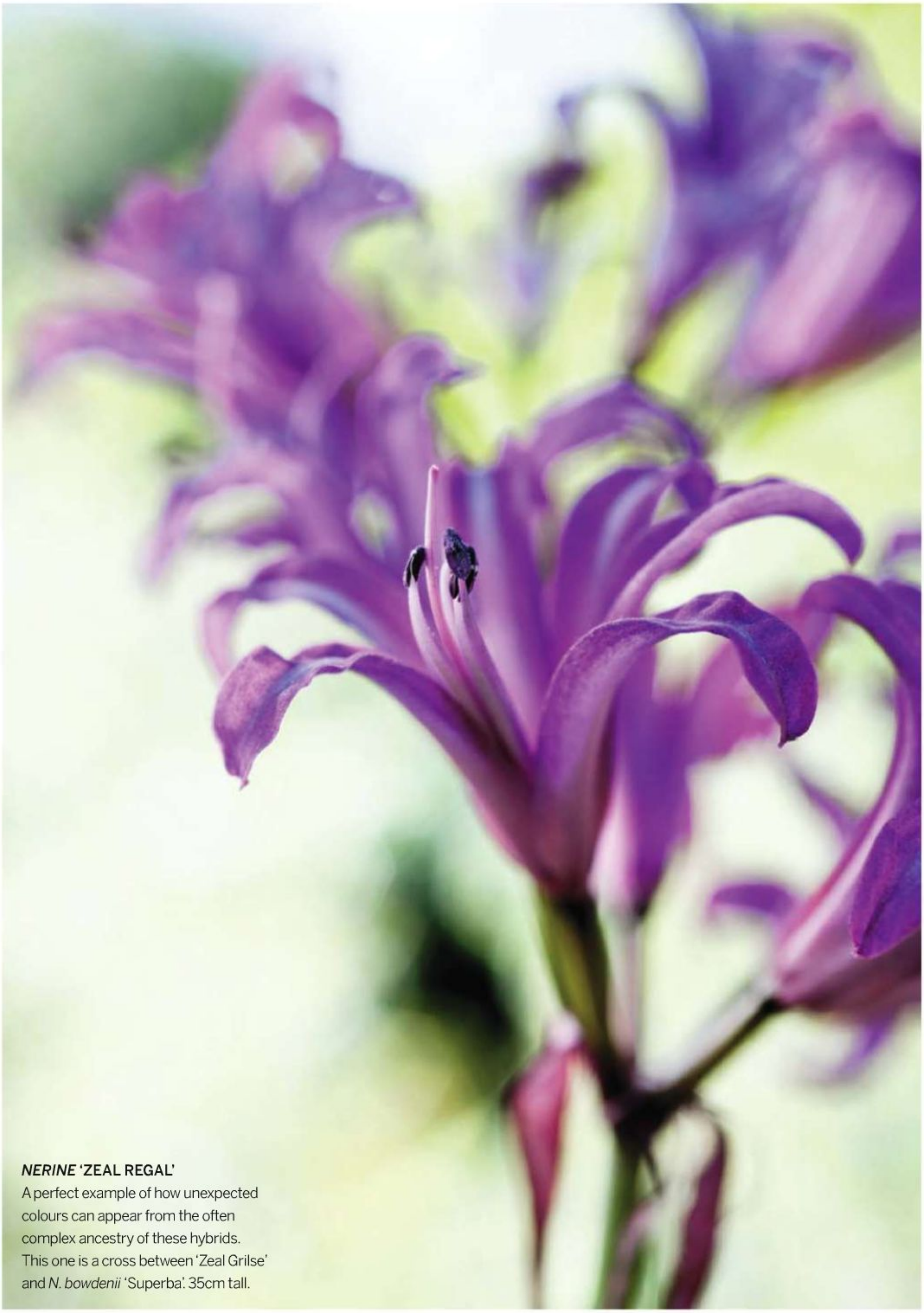
***NERINE BOWDENII* 'PINK SURPRISE'**
When Avon Bulbs received some *N. bowdenii* 'Alba' from a Dutch supplier they found that the petals had an unexpected stripe – hence 'Pink Surprise'. 90cm tall.



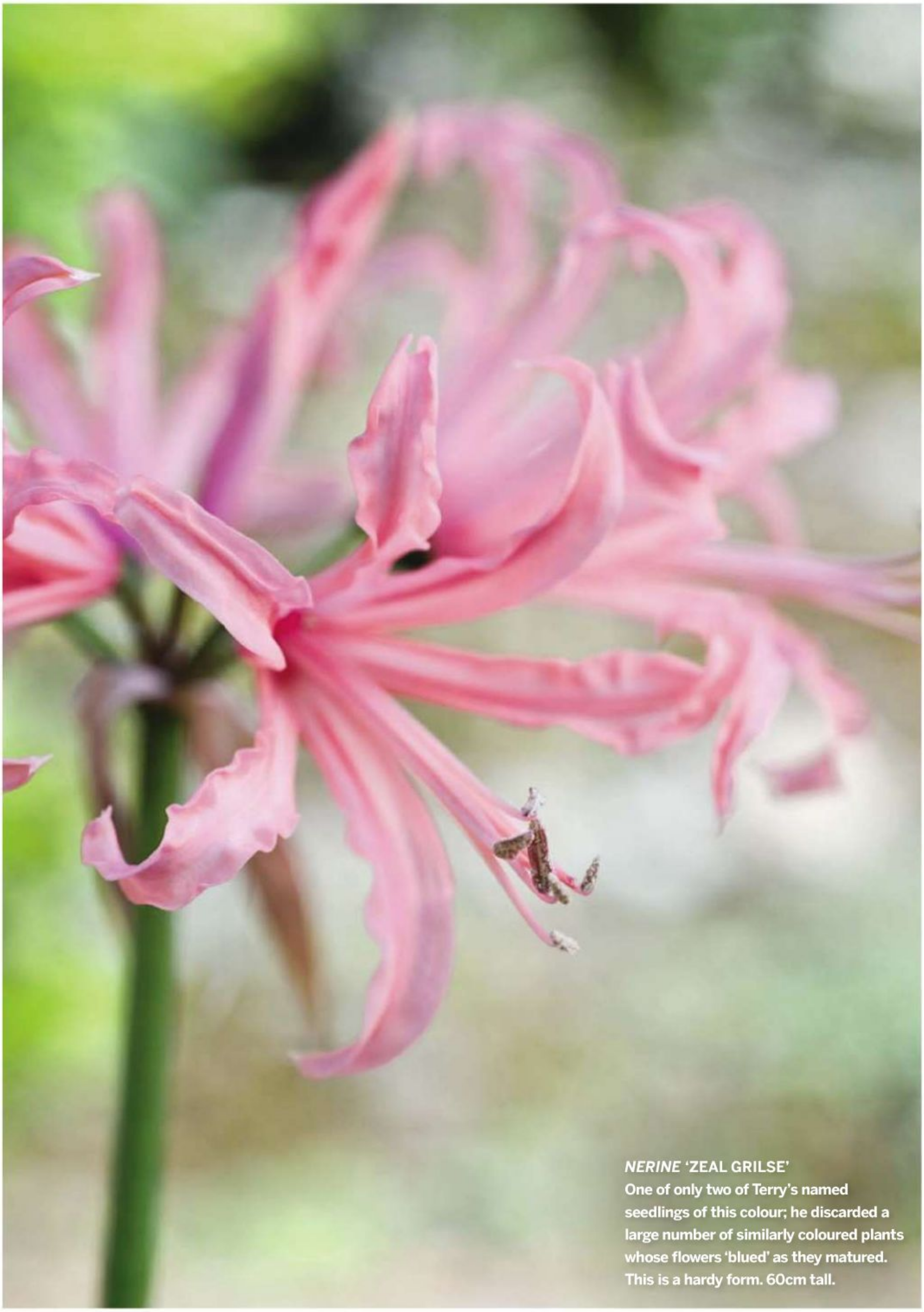
N. UNDULATA
In a frost-free greenhouse, this deceptively delicate-looking species is evergreen, and probably responsible for the extreme ruffling found in many *N. sarniensis* hybrids. 40cm tall.



***N.* 'ZEAL CANDY STRIPE'**
One of Terry Jones' early-named hardy hybrids, this towers over most forms of *N. bowdenii* with a confection of large, fragrant flowers. 1m tall.



***NERINE* 'ZEAL REGAL'**
A perfect example of how unexpected colours can appear from the often complex ancestry of these hybrids. This one is a cross between 'Zeal Grilse' and *N. bowdenii* 'Superba'. 35cm tall.



***NERINE* 'ZEAL GRILSE'**
One of only two of Terry's named seedlings of this colour; he discarded a large number of similarly coloured plants whose flowers 'blued' as they matured. This is a hardy form. 60cm tall.

> “*Many of the most exciting developments have been crosses between* Nerine bowdenii *and* N. sarniensis”

▷ lilies – forms of *Nerine sarniensis* – a range of colours has been developed, which include corals and coppers, oranges and clarets, purples, pinks, scarlets and pure searing red.

Many of the most exciting developments have been crosses between *Nerine bowdenii* and *N. sarniensis*, in attempts to combine the hardiness of the first with the gorgeous colour palette of the latter. One of the prime movers in these endeavours was the late, great Terry Jones, a superb plantsman and a lovely person who, though he had a wicked sense of humour, took his plants very seriously. He once told me that he had his house built in a particular way to ensure he could grow certain species tulips to perfection. Since his death five years ago, Matt Bishop, from The Garden House at Buckland Monachorum in Devon, has taken on and developed his breeding programme.

Terry left Matt not only his stud book, recording the entire history of his hybridization programme from its first adventurous steps in 1967, but also all his nerines. One of Terry's most celebrated selections is *N.* 'Zeal Giant' (below), a cross between *Nerine bowdenii* and *N.* 'Hera', itself a cross between *N. bowdenii* and *N. sarniensis*. Now fairly widely distributed, this gorgeous cultivar is, as its name suggests, big and bold, and it has deep pink flowers of great substance. It is not totally hardy but is tougher than many hybrids.

Matt's efforts have led to several new nerines, unnamed as yet, to salivate over. All Matt's nerines, like Terry's before them, include the word the name 'Zeal' in their name; hopefully many will eventually become available to nerinaholics.

It is difficult to single out specific cultivars for praise, as there are so many good ones; Terry had already made his own selections and rejected countless plants as not coming up to the mark. *Nerine* 'Zeal ▷

How to grow nerines

The hardiest species, *Nerine bowdenii*, is often planted in cottage gardens, where its clumps often build into extensive colonies. They seem to thrive on neglect and it is often when bulbs piggy-back on each other that a big splurge of their shocking pink flowers is produced.

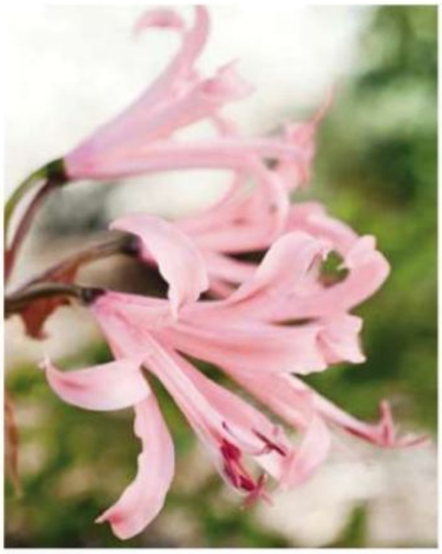
The lesson to be learned from this is that nerines don't like to be overfed. Where they come from they grow in thin soils often on rocky mountain slopes. Overfeeding induces lush, leafy growth and limits flower production. Although *Nerine* foliage is green and strap-like and quite attractive, what we are all interested in is the flowers.

Choose the sunniest, best-protected site you have.

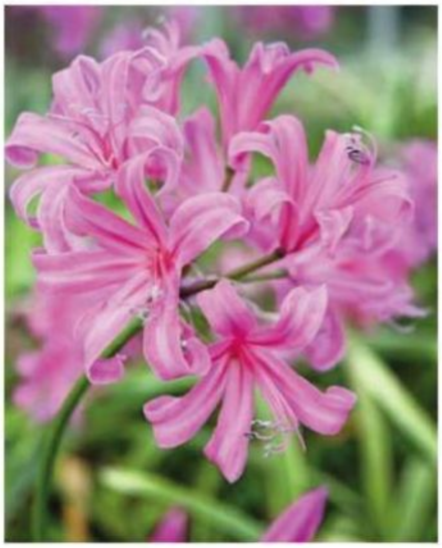
Nerines don't like to compete, they prefer to have the place to themselves, so make sure there is no competition from more ebullient characters.

If you are growing your nerines in pots, the same applies. Only water regularly when bulbs are in growth. When bulbs are resting, only water on demand – but don't let the bulbs become desiccated.

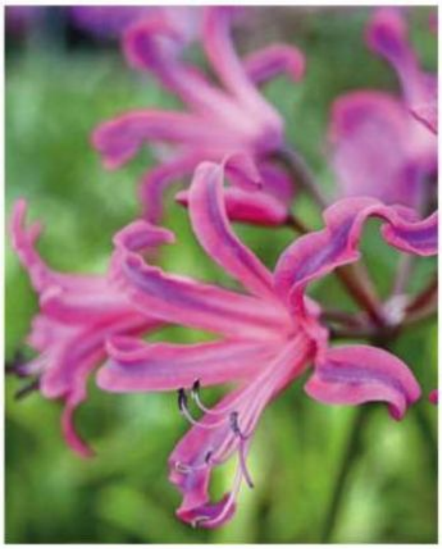
Plant with the nose of the bulb protruding from soil or compost. Plant deep and they may be shy to flower.



***NERINE* Zeal seedling, pale salmon**
Several shades paler than 'Zeal Grilse' is this seedling found in Terry's garden after he died. Suggestions for a name on a postcard to The Garden House, please! 40cm tall.



***N.* 'ZEAL GIANT'**
One of the tallest and freely available of the Zeal hybrids, the large flowers' strident shade is definitely not for the faint-hearted. They reach a height of up to 1m.



***N.* 'ZEAL PURPLE STRIPE'**
One of the earliest to flower, and a sister seedling to 97C (pages 46-47), this clone formed a massive clump in Terry's garden. 50cm tall.

Foliage

Nerines are divided into three groups according to the time they produce their foliage: winter-growing (such as *Nerine bowdenii*), summer-growing (*N. sarniensis*) and evergreen (*N. filifolia*).

One of the common names for *Nerine bowdenii* is naked ladies, because its leaves have died down by the time the flower stems shoot up.

Where to see

The Garden House, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7LQ. Tel 01822 854769, www.thegardenhouse.org.uk

Where to buy

- Avon Bulbs, Burnt House Farm, Mid Lambrook, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5HE. Tel 01460 242177, www.avonbulbs.co.uk
- Broadleigh Bulbs, Bishops Hull, Taunton, Somerset TA4 1AE. Tel 01823 286231, www.broadleighbulbs.co.uk
- Cotswold Garden Flowers, Sands Lane, Badsey, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ. Tel 01386 422829, www.cgf.net
- Wildside Nursery, Green Lane, Buckland Monachoram, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7NP. Tel 01822 855 755, www.wileyatwildside.com

> “*The sight of nerines on a sunny day gladdens the heart and banishes all trepidation about the ensuing season*”

▷ Grilse', though, is particularly lovely (page 50). It's a second-generation hybrid between *Nerine* 'Marnie Rogerson' and a lovely old *N. sarniensis* cultivar, 'Scarlet Beauty'.

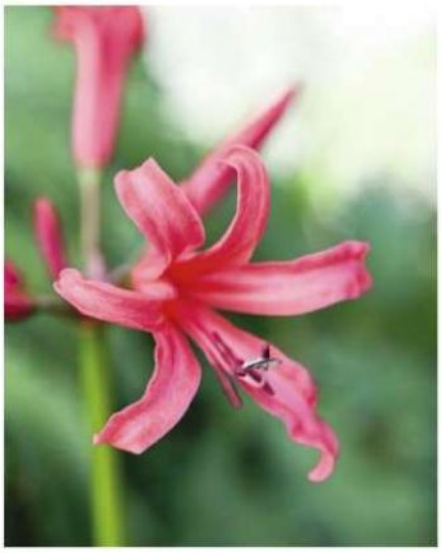
All these hybrids are sterile, so do not set seed. They do produce some pollen, which can be used to "back-cross" on to a seed-producing species, in most cases selected forms of *N. bowdenii*. It's an incestuous affair. Some of the resulting flowers are subtle, some glorious and some downright tarty. *N.* 'Purple Stripe' (page 51) is self-explanatory; many will find it appealing. It's a bit over the top for me but it has been used, and no doubt will be used again, to create more new cultivars. It is a predecessor of both 'Zeal Plum' (opposite) and 'Zeal Embers' (below). An earlier plant dating back to the 1970s ,'Zeal Candy Stripe' (page 48), is pink on pink.

Another flower with strident coloration is *Nerine* 'Zeal Regal' (page 49), which is perhaps best associated with silvers and blues (as are so many of those nerines that have a tiny helping of blue in their flower colour). Some of Terry's hybrids have soft salmon and coral colouring, and these are my favourites. It's probably cowardly on my part, because they must be the easiest to use in association with other plants. Having said that, there is a lot of yellow about when they flower, and a combination of *Nerine* 'Zeal Pale Salmon' or *N.* 'Zeal Grilse' with rudbeckias might make the toes of even the most insensitive of colour-combiners curl.

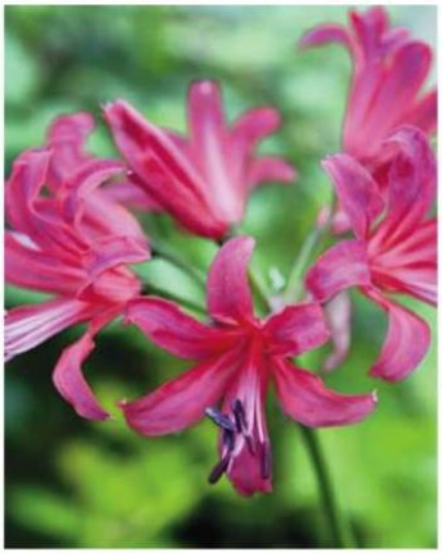
Whether bold or subtle in colour, though, the sight of nerines on a sunny day gladdens the heart and banishes all trepidation about the coming winter. They are a reprise of summer and their scintillating colour is almost other-worldly.□

• THANKS TO Matt Bishop at The Garden House, where the plants in this feature were photographed.

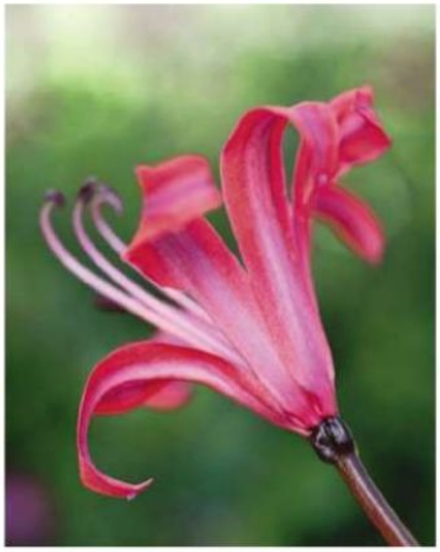
NEXT MONTH Hardy chrysanthemums



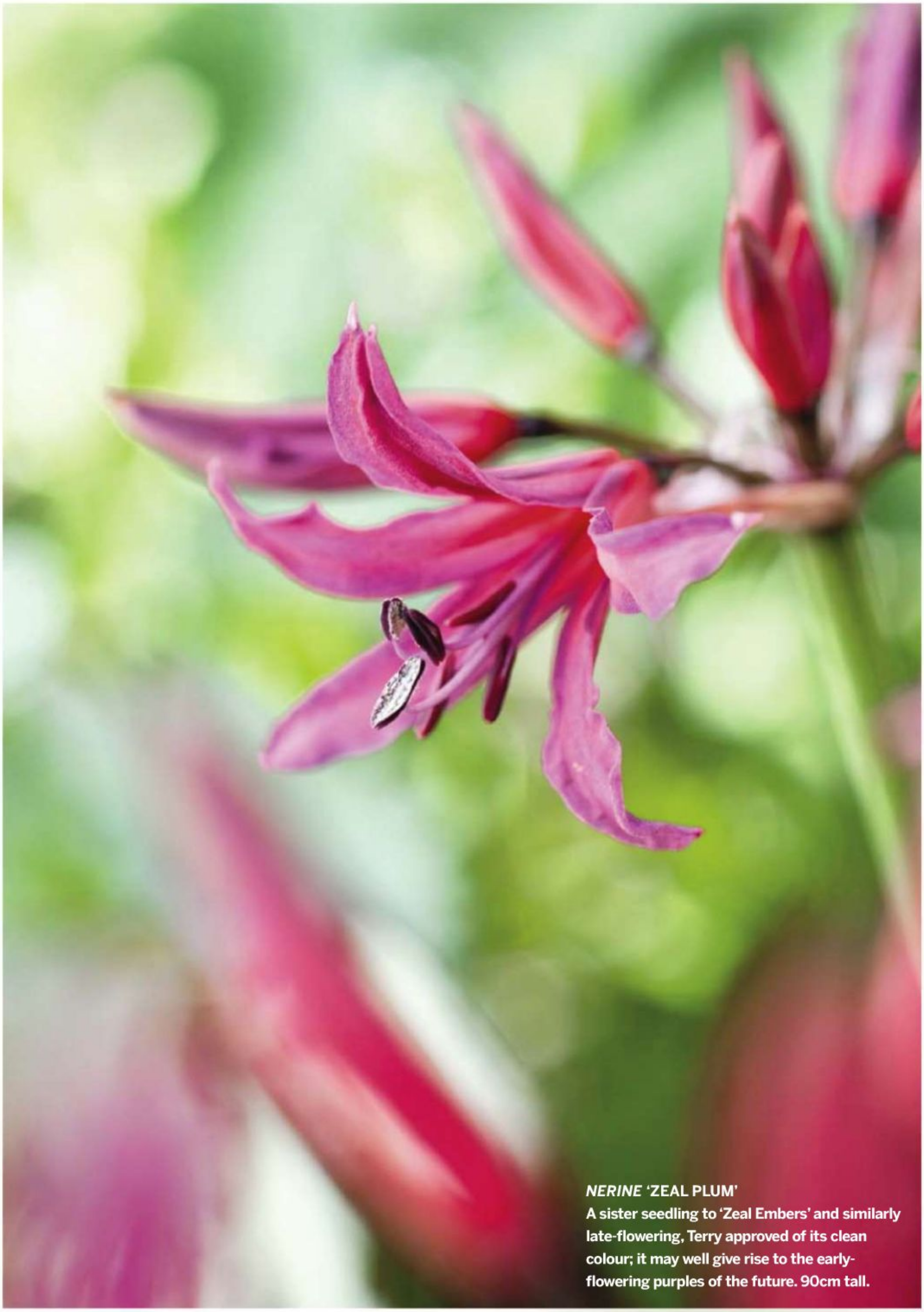
***NERINE* Zeal seedling 111**
Surviving the past two winters outside and in common with many nerine hybrids, the flower colour is a challenge to describe and changes according to the light source. 35cm tall.



***N.* 'ZEAL EMBERS'**
The nearest Terry came to his dream of breeding a hardy red *Nerine*, this is scarlet in bud opening to red with pink undertones. A taller grower and late-flowering. 90cm tall.



***N.* 'ZEAL CHOICE'**
Cross No. 94 has proven a rich source for coloured hardy hybrids; this stately selection by nurseryman Dick Fulcher has large reddish flowers with purple overtones. 80cm tall.



NERINE **'ZEAL PLUM'**
A sister seedling to 'Zeal Embers' and similarly late-flowering, Terry approved of its clean colour; it may well give rise to the early-flowering purples of the future. 90cm tall.

Robin Lane Fox

An Oxford don specialising in ancient history, Robin is also one of Britain's finest garden writers, celebrated for his column in the *FT*

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

For the past 40 years Robin Lane Fox has quietly nurtured a devoted readership by means of his weekly column in the *Financial Times*, where his forthright opinions are delivered with devil-may-care panache.

At the moment, Robin is chiselling away at the perceived pomposity of the New Perennials movement, dubbing the style 'waving Euro-grasses', while a few decades ago he even got into a skirmish with rival columnist 'Christo' Lloyd.

Horticulture is not Robin's day job, however: since 1977 he has been fellow in ancient history at New College, Oxford, where we meet on a sunny summer's day in a quadrangle beside a big chestnut-leaved oak – planted by Robin, like most of the plant life on view. So is gardening just a sideline? After all, he has his Hollywood career to think about: Alexander the Great is one of his specialisms and it was in this capacity he acted as adviser to director Oliver Stone during the making of the 2004 epic *Alexander*, even going so far as to appear on horseback in the battle scenes. But Robin says that gardening is essential. "Without the gardening I would never have been an academic," he says, as the 'fellow in charge' of the gardens at New College. Indeed, he conducts a tour of the gardens like some exceptionally quick-witted lord of the manor surveying his demesne.

> *"The more I have come to know, the more I've come to believe that there is no clear distinction between good and bad taste"*

Like many plantsmen Robin does not believe in garden design (only 'gardening', considered a completely different activity), and the long mixed border at New College fully bears out this approach, with its regular arrangement of key perennials – notably bright white *Nicotiana* and red dahlias – spaced out evenly along its length, like cones on a motorway. Closer up, there is much for plant enthusiasts to enjoy, including a trio of rambler roses against the rear wall named after the classical graces: Thalia, Euphrosyne and Aglaia. Robin describes these as "a retort to my colleagues who wanted to elect token women to honorary fellowships at the college".

Back in the senior common room we are soon tucking in to a typically ecumenical Oxford lunch of chicken curry, profiteroles and rosé. "I was always a cultivator," Robin says, "and that's what I admire, the people who grow. If you don't do it, you're just a voyeur." Robin was a gardener from a young age and by his teens he was buying mail-order plants from the famous Six Hills Nursery – "One and seven each," he recalls. "I remember a climactic outing to Hidcote in 1963 [when he was 16] which opened my eyes. I realised what a garden could be. I also went to Waterperry Gardens, where I was blessed by Miss Havergal [principal of the ladies' gardening college]. She asked me to hold a trowel, and when I did so correctly she asked me to choose a plant. For some reason I chose *Arenaria montana*."

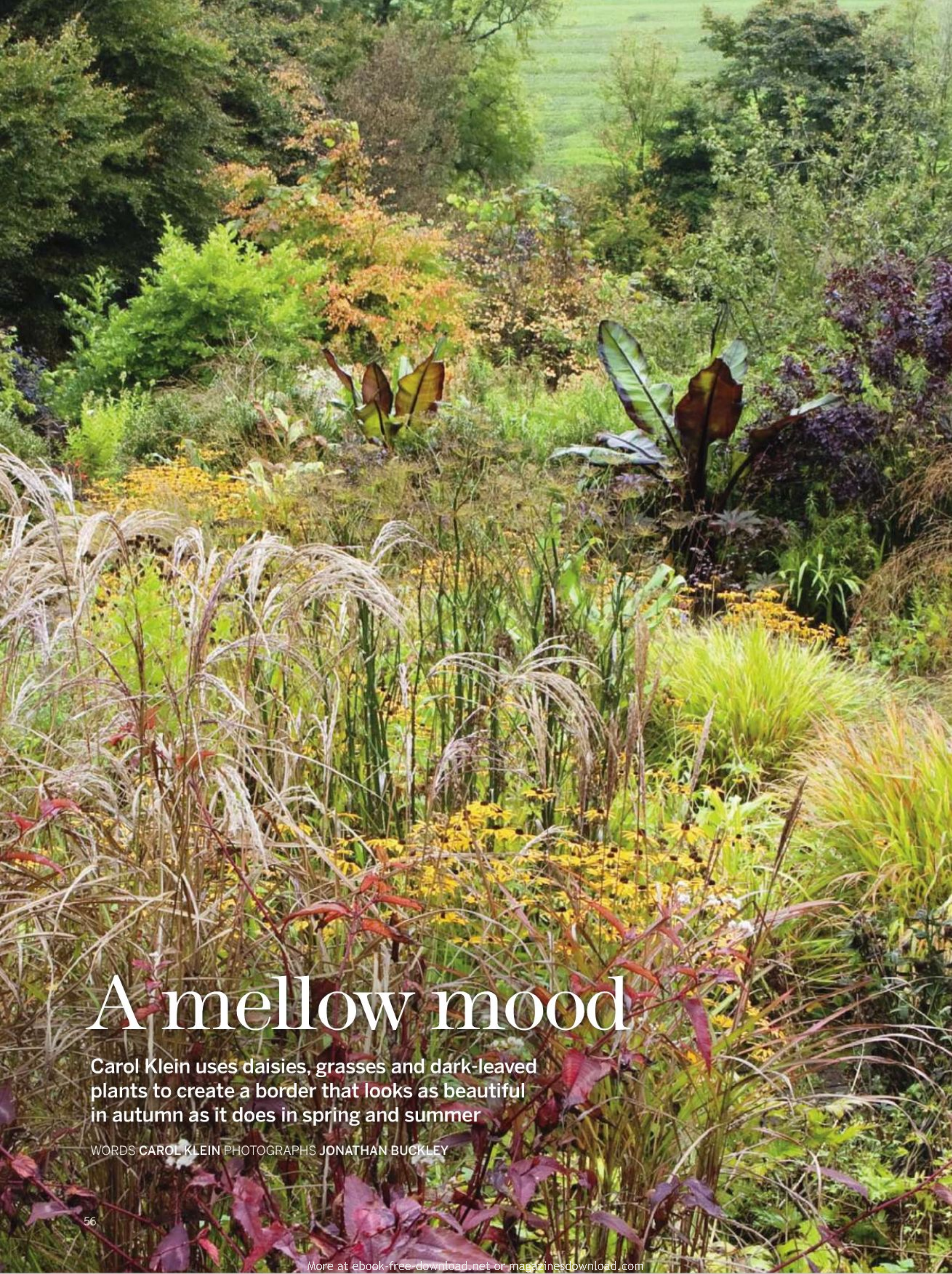
On leaving Eton and before going up to Oxford, Robin applied to Munich Botanic Garden on the advice of Valerie Finnis, the great alpinist (and networker). "I was hired by mistake," Robin claims. "Our house was called Middleton and they apparently thought I was connected to EA Bowles of Myddelton House [another great alpinist]." Later he also worked for a month with the influential cottage gardener Margery Fish at East Lambrook Manor in Somerset.

The greatest influence on Robin was that Anglo-American stylist Nancy Lancaster – he lived for a while in a rented cottage on her estate and they gardened alongside each other. "Fashion is for people with no taste," is a typical Nancy saying, quoted approvingly by Robin in his new collection of provocative garden essays, *Thoughtful Gardening*. Perhaps inspired by this, Robin says, "The more I have come to know, the more I've come to believe that there is no clear distinction between good and bad taste."

After lunch Robin suddenly speculates about a potential other life. "In the 19th century I would have been a vicar," he says, "a very useful vicar who would have studied Greek, recorded the local flora and believed in my church building more than in God." It seems surprising that Robin the Oxford don should be fantasising about being a Victorian vicar as a delightful anachronism when just across the room is a wooden contraption, clearly still in use, which he tells me was designed to facilitate the passing of port across the hearth without the fellows having to rise from their chairs. While Robin is certainly not stuck in the past, this is one of those 'only in Oxford' moments – and long may they linger. However the bottle is transported, many will wish to raise a glass to another 40 years of Robin Lane Fox as a garden columnist.

- Robin's latest book, *Thoughtful Gardening*, is reviewed on page 95.

NEXT MONTH David Richardson



A mellow mood

Carol Klein uses daisies, grasses and dark-leaved plants to create a border that looks as beautiful in autumn as it does in spring and summer

WORDS **CAROL KLEIN** PHOTOGRAPHS **JONATHAN BUCKLEY**

> *“the lack of colour extremes in autumn throws other factors to the forefront. Texture, pattern and scale all take on greater significance”*

Carol Klein is a plantswoman, nursery owner and presenter of BBC gardening programmes

As autumn progresses, the kaleidoscope of colour in our gardens begins to change. It's like a watercolour where paint is first applied with a range of bright colours, each dab and stroke distinct from the last – until now, when a giant brush descends; a soft and loving brush that washes over the picture, bringing the colours into intimate contact with each other. Edges become more indistinct and colour more muted. Nothing shouts or clamours. All is warm, rich, mellow.

At this time of year it would be difficult for anyone, except perhaps a determined colour iconoclast, to make things clash. But the lack of colour extremes in autumn throws other factors to the forefront. Texture, pattern and scale all take on greater significance. Movement, too, and sound, play leading roles as autumn progresses. It is hard to depict such elements, but that is where your imagination comes into play. Lilting grasses whisper as they sway in the breeze. In the high branches of trees leaves rustle, then begin to make a crunchier, more abrasive sound just before they fall. A visual rhythm runs through the plants. There are melodies, crashing crescendos and quiet pauses, and the pizzicato of oft-repeated plants.

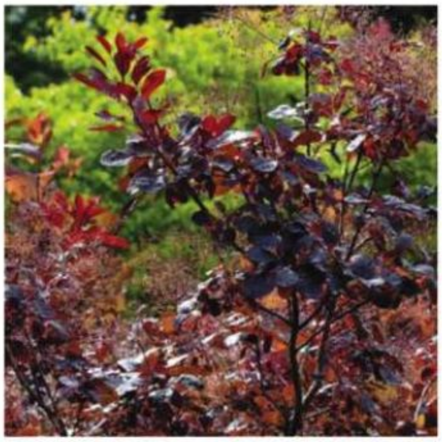
Hot colours, dark leaves

This, the final plant combination in my series of seasonal highlights, is in our brick garden, so called because the paths are composed of bricks, though they are barely visible at this stage. Growth has reached its zenith, and from now on plants will diminish gradually.

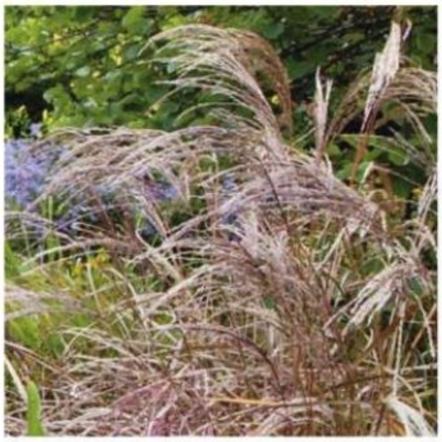
The 'background beds' running across the picture are our 'hot beds'. Purple-leaved bananas, huge patches of *Euphorbia palustris* in the process of metamorphosis into its autumn garb, and purple-leaved shrubs and trees. *Cotinus coggygria* Purpureus Group and *Cotinus* 'Grace', bronze-leaved elder and purple-leaved *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Rotfuchs' all provide dark accents, thrusting the mobile blades of grass into the limelight. Four clumps of *Hakonechloa macra* mark the centre of the brick garden at the convergence of two crossing paths. They are raised up slightly proud of the other planting in four 'pots' created by placing three coping stones on their sides, together forming a triangular space. The advantage of this is that the grasses have direct access to the ground beneath rather than having their roots restricted, as they would in pots. The gold, soft greeny-pinks and bronzes of foliage provide a subtle surround for primary colours, mainly blues and yellows in the form of three 'prairie' daisies, *Aster* 'Little Carlow', *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* and *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen'.

One of the most engaging aspects of gardening is watching the ebb and flow in an area as plants grow and change. Though the 'hot' border is full of shooting stars – giant red poppies, dahlias and their ilk – most plants in the brick garden have long seasons, making a contribution from the first magical days of spring through until winter. These autumn daisies have their special time and, although their earlier foliage and flower buds lend structure and weight to the planting, it is now that they come into their own. Clouds of blue with high notes of chrome and lemon-yellow create a feeling of abundance perfectly in tune with ripening apples and the heady scent of sun-kissed blackberries.□

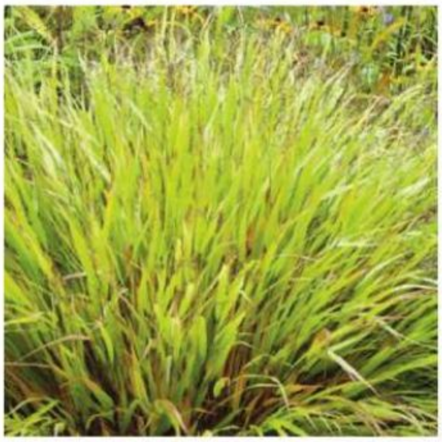
BBC Carol Klein appears on *Gardeners' World*, BBC2, Fridays at 8.30pm



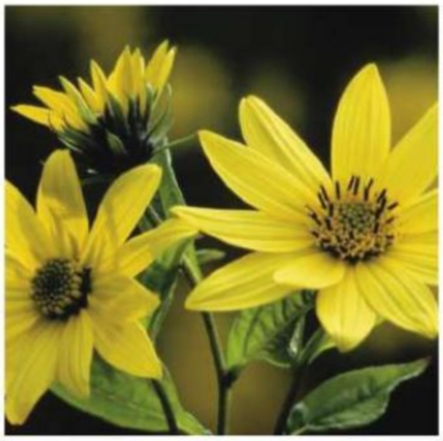
1. *COTINUS COGGYGRIA* PURPUREUS GROUP
The round leaves of *Cotinus* flutter around in the slightest breeze, lightening the big, shadowy shapes of the shrub. Flowering brings about a further transformation as leaves are lost under a veil of misty blooms, giving it the vernacular name 'smoke bush'.



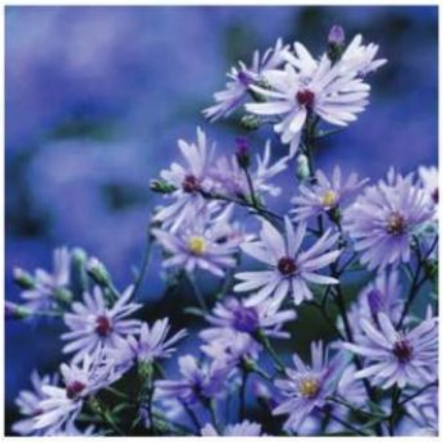
4. *MISCANTHUS SINENSIS* 'FLAMINGO'
Of all the eulalia grasses, this has to be one of the most beautiful, scoring top marks throughout the growing season and way into winter. It is ideal for small gardens, where it makes a neat, compact plant up to 1.5m tall. Its silken, coppery pink flowers later become fluffy, and persist well into the winter.



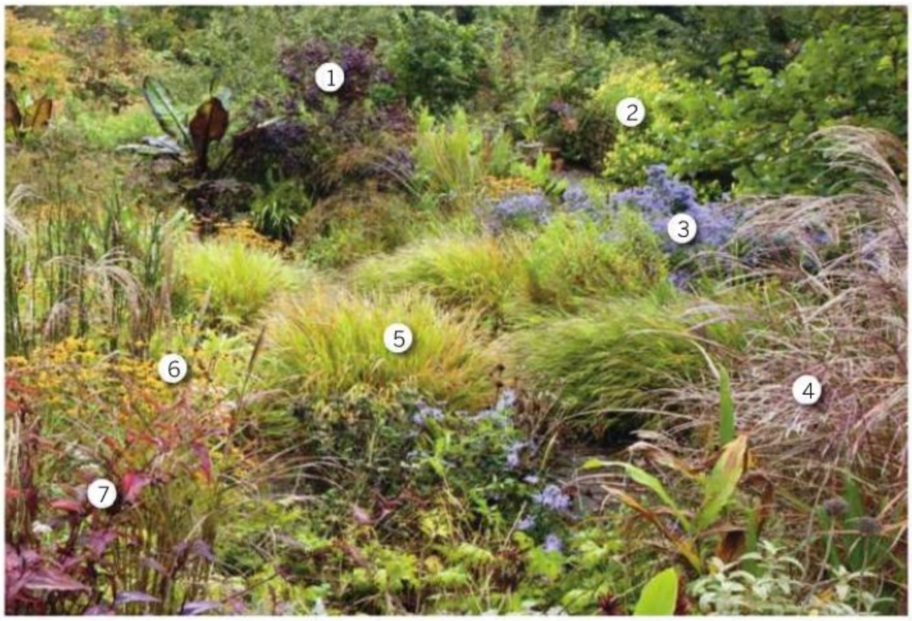
5. *HAKONECHLOA MACRA*
This deciduous grass goes through engaging transformations throughout the year, starting with bright, sparky young shoots emerging in spring. Through summer it is fresh and green but as days shorten it takes on orange and russet hues, and inflorescences join its wafty progress.

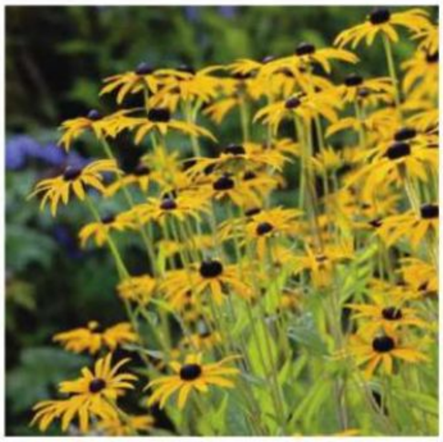


2. *HELIANTHUS* 'LEMON QUEEN'
This perennial sunflower has relatively small daisies but makes an impact from the sheer number of its flowers and the immensity of its stems, rising head and shoulders above its neighbours. Every few years it outgrows its position, but it's easy enough to lift and split – and good exercise for the biceps too.

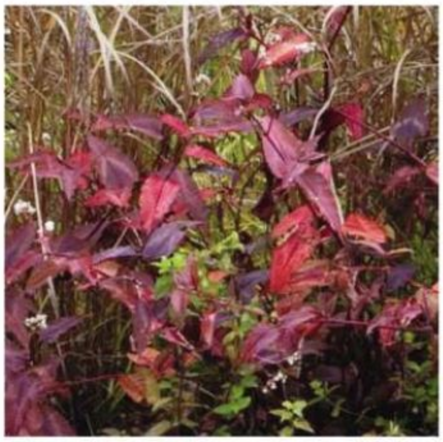


3. *ASTER* 'LITTLE CARLOW'
This daisy provides a huge treat for gardeners and autumn-hatching butterflies alike when it begins to create clouds of pure and brilliant blue. Always trouble-free and reliable, each year it seems to get bigger and better. Its foliage remains pristine – and, unusually for a daisy, it can cope with shade.





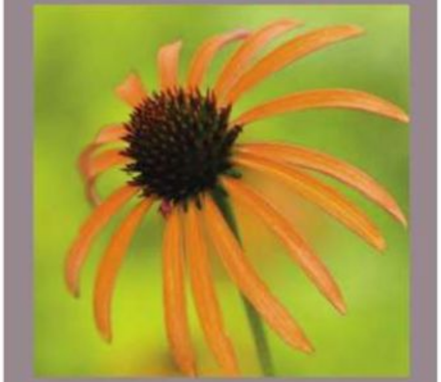
6. *RUDBECKIA FULGIDA* var. *DEAMII*
All rudbeckias are yellow. Some gardeners are snooty about yellow. I used to be one of them – not any more. A few clumps or even one large plant of *R. fulgida* var. *deamii* can create a feeling of ease, as though summer would last indefinitely. It is an archetypal 'Indian summer' plant.



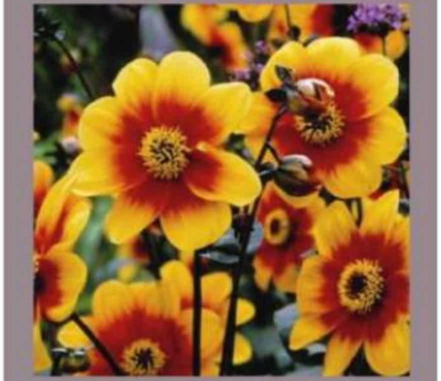
7. *PERSICARIA MICROCEPHALA* 'RED DRAGON'
During the last few years this knotweed has become widespread, not because it's invasive – it isn't – but because it is such a versatile and amenable plant. Handsome, too, with its red leaves marked boldly with bronze. I love it.

Planting alternatives

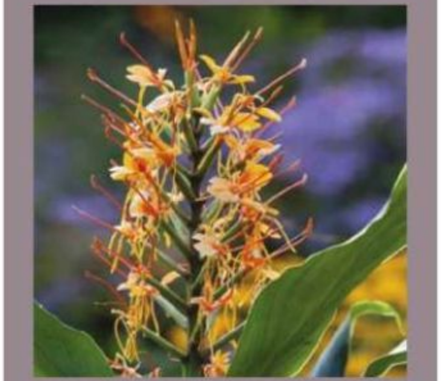
Customise Carol's planting scheme with three attractive alternatives



Echinacea 'Art's Pride'
Revelling in sunshine, *Echinacea purpurea* prefers a well-drained soil. Perhaps the most striking hybrid is 'Art's Pride' – a vivid orange-red with a bronze cone. It would fit in wonderfully with this mellow scene.



Dahlia 'Moonfire'
This cultivar burns with an intensity of colour unequalled even among other dahlias, perhaps the most vibrantly coloured of all flowers. Handsome bronze leaves are the perfect foil for all the heat generated by the flowers.

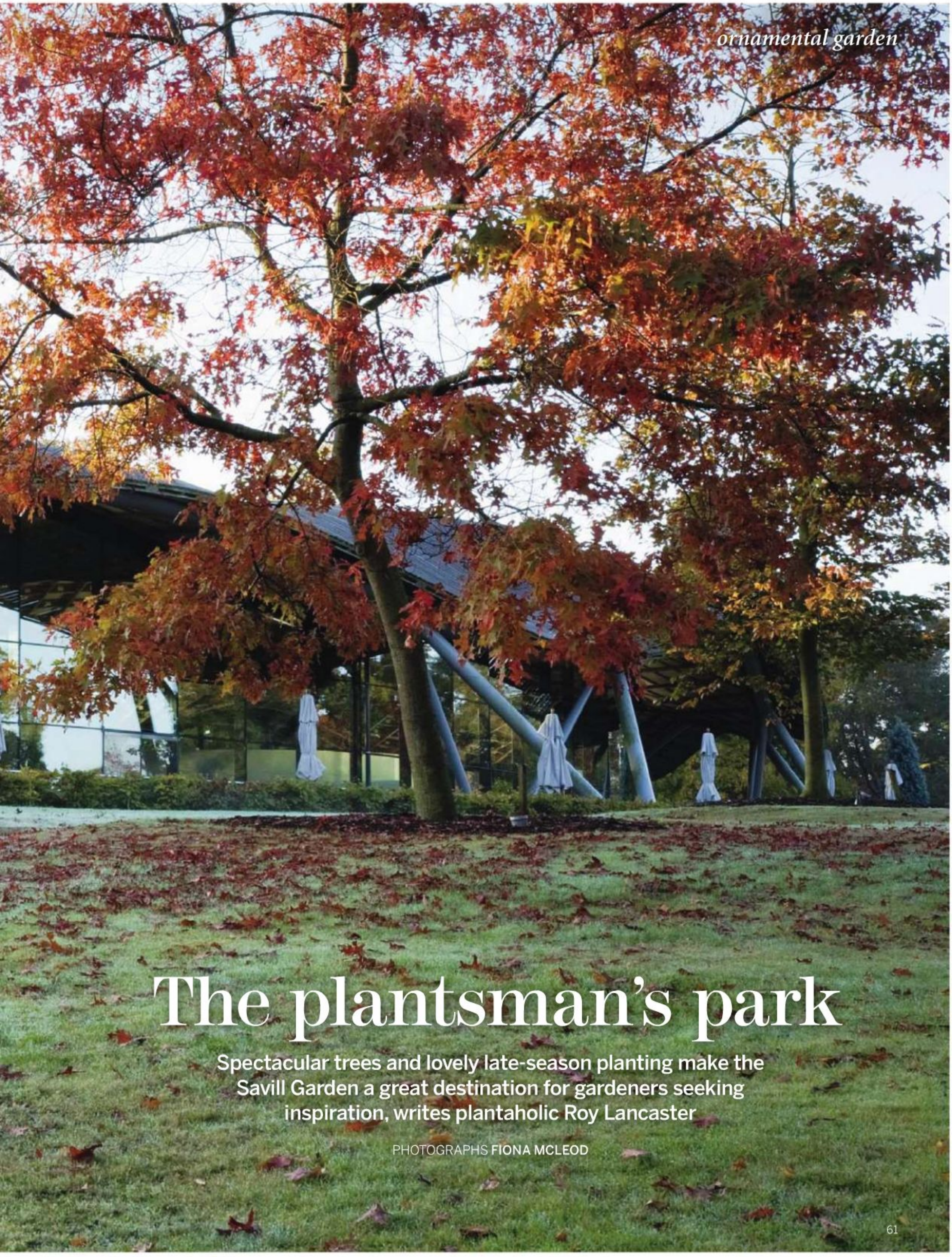


Hedychium densiflorum 'Assam Orange'
Ginger lilies from the foothills of the Himalayas introduce a sultry note. Their big paddle-shaped leaves and their stature lend glamour, and many are scented, too. Close your eyes and their perfume transports you to faraway places.

In brief

WHAT Large gardens with woodland, ornamental planting and ponds.
WHERE Windsor Great Park, Berkshire.
SIZE 35 acres.
CONDITIONS A range of micro-climates sustains a variety of cool-temperate plants.
SOIL Varies from acid peat to Bagshot sand which is free draining and dry in summer.
FEATURES Woodland garden with glades, water features and display areas where trees, shrubs, alpines, perennials and half-hardy plants in season are grown to perfection. Temperate House for less hardy plants.
MAP See page 64.

A scarlet oak, *Quercus coccinea* 'Splendens', offers visitors their first glimpse of the gorgeous autumn colours that await them in the garden beyond. The Savill Building behind houses a restaurant and visitors' centre.



The plantsman's park

Spectacular trees and lovely late-season planting make the Savill Garden a great destination for gardeners seeking inspiration, writes plantaholic Roy Lancaster

PHOTOGRAPHS **FIONA MCLEOD**

THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT Two silver limes, *Tilia tomentosa*, cast dappled shade over tussock grasses in the New Zealand garden.

TOP RIGHT Hot colours combine with red *Cuphea cyanea*, *Kniphofia* 'Tawny King', dark-leaved *Canna indica* 'Purpurea' and stiff stems of grass *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut'.

BOTTOM LEFT Rich late-season plantings in the herbaceous border include the tall speckled grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Strictus', yellow daisies of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm', tawny plumes of *Amaranthus cruentus* 'Golden Giant' and peach-coloured *Dahlia* 'David Howard'.

BOTTOM RIGHT *Miscanthus sinensis* cultivars 'Ferner Osten' and 'Kleine Silberspinne' are planted with swathes of other grasses around the Temperate House.

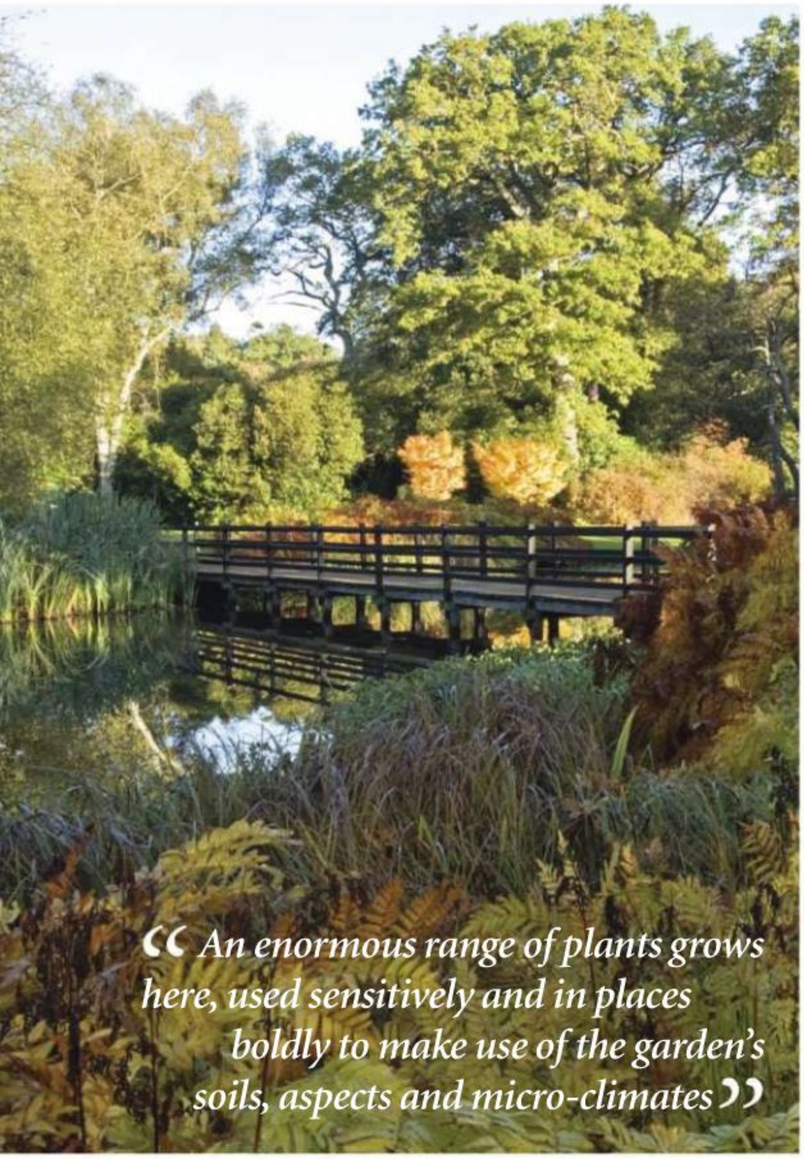
The Savill Garden and I go back quite a long time. My first visit, in the early 1960s, proved a revelation, both in the wealth of hardy woody plants and perennials I saw there, and for the rich variety of landscapes in which they were displayed. In the years since I have returned many times, in all seasons, and not once have I been left with the feeling of a garden resting on its laurels or with a resistance to change.

The professionalism employed in running this garden, near Virginia Water in Windsor Great Park, is one of its defining elements. This strength derived originally from its creator, the late Sir Eric Savill. In 1931, while deputy surveyor at Windsor Great Park, he began to plant what was essentially a woodland garden on the park's southeastern boundary. Savill's understanding of a plant's requirements, and its use in creating a successful arrangement pleasing to the eye, was instrumental in the garden we see today. Most importantly, his growing skills and his 'feel' for 'natural' associations have been respected and continued by succeeding generations of gardeners down to the present day as Mark Flanagan, keeper of the gardens, and Harvey Stephens, head of the Savill Garden, will readily acknowledge.

Many gardens in one

The Savill Garden is not one but a series of gardens and landscape features. An enormous range of plants grows here, used sensitively and in places boldly to make use of the garden's soils, aspects and micro-climates. The peaty land flanking the stream and lakes, for instance, is home to spectacular clumps of our native royal fern, *Osmunda regalis*. This fern is arguably at its best in autumn, when its fronds turn to rusty brown shades.

Entering the garden through the Savill Building, with its spectacular wave-like roof (pictured on previous pages), a short stroll brings you to the New Zealand Garden. It boasts a goodly selection of Antipodean delights including hebes, cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) and bold clumps of



> *An enormous range of plants grows here, used sensitively and in places boldly to make use of the garden's soils, aspects and micro-climates*

ornamental grasses such as *Anemanthele lessoniana* and the tall-stemmed, buff-plumed tussock grass *Cortaderia richardii*.

Close by, beyond the Temperate House, lies a large, open area, the Summer Gardens, where perennials, roses and shrubs reign supreme. This is a powerhouse of colour from June to August. Intelligent and adventurous planting ensures that there is plenty to complement the traditional autumn fare of berries and brilliant foliage elsewhere. Two highlights of this area are the Herbaceous Borders and the Dry Garden. The borders have been designed to cover the latter part of the season, so expect to see *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum Group and bold, clumping grasses (pictured on opposite page).

Eclectic planting

Perennials, both hardy and half-hardy, are also present in the nearby Jubilee Garden and the Dry Garden. This feature was created in 1978 by the late John Bond on the site of the old rose garden. John, a formidable and much admired horticulturist, planned the garden as an early response to the threat of global warming. An informal stroll-through design with a gravel mulch, it remains a testimony to his vision. Its eclectic planting of woody and perennial plants includes many from the world's Mediterranean-type climate regions, and continues to please and educate. A red-stemmed strawberry tree (*Arbutus* x *andrachnoides*) dominates one end of the garden while *Phlomis* species, euphorbias, Mexican salvias and ornamental grasses, including *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus', provide plenty of autumn interest.

The most recent addition is the Rose Garden, opened in June this year, with roses chosen for their scent and repeat flowering. But by far the major part of the Savill Garden is occupied by woodland, with open areas and glades containing as good a selection of the best hardy ornamental trees and shrubs for British gardens as you will find anywhere. Here thrive North American oaks, hickories and sweet gums vying with Japanese and

▷

THIS PAGE, LEFT The Woodland Walk leads over Casson Bridge to towering oaks, including the common oak, *Quercus robur*.

TOP RIGHT A spectacular display of pumpkins and squashes comes from more than 500 plants grown behind the scenes in the garden nursery.

BOTTOM RIGHT Crisp yew hedges and the purple haze of *Salvia nemorosa* 'Ostfriesland' frame this view of the Golden Jubilee garden. At the centre of the picture is a water sculpture by Barry Mason.

The tawny tones of the native royal fern, *Osmunda regalis*, grow in a think clump on this small island in the Lower Pond.

▷ other maples in the brilliance of their autumn foliage, while viburnums and cotoneasters, mountain ash and others provide a bonus of colourful berries, their mass displays matching the equally vaunted early season and floral displays of camellias, rhododendrons, magnolias and bulbs.

If, like me, you enjoy a garden for the special plants and displays each season offers, then the Savill Garden truly is nirvana. Should you, however, have a special liking for the closing of the year and its colourful finale, then this is definitely the place to be.□

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS The Savill Garden, The Great Park, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT.

TEL 01784 435544

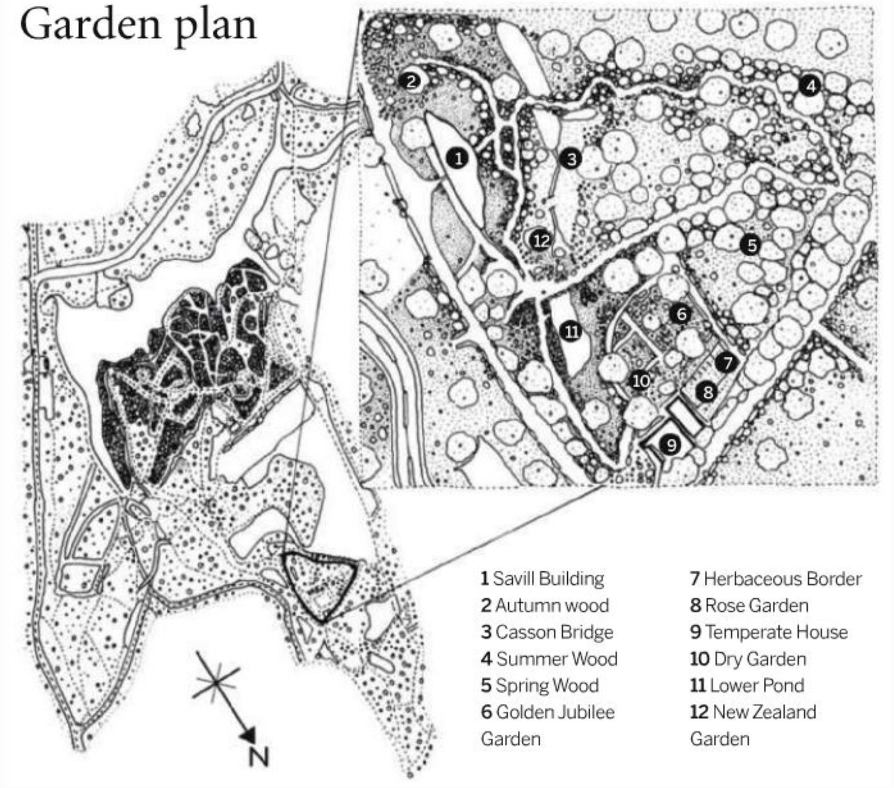
WEBSITE www.theroyallandscape.co.uk

OPEN Daily; 10am to 6pm until 31 October; 10am to 4.30pm from 1 November to 28 February 2011.

ADMISSION £8, seniors £7.50, children (6-16) £3.75 (£6 / £5.50 / £2.25 in winter).

BBC Roy Lancaster is a plantsman, planthunter and writer who regularly appears on BBC radio and TV.

Garden plan



1 Savill Building
2 Autumn wood
3 Casson Bridge
4 Summer Wood
5 Spring Wood
6 Golden Jubilee Garden
7 Herbaceous Border
8 Rose Garden
9 Temperate House
10 Dry Garden
11 Lower Pond
12 New Zealand Garden

PLAN BY KERRY LEMON

Nine plants for autumn

Roy Lancaster chooses his seasonal favourites from the Savill Garden

1. *Vitis coignetiae*
A vigorous, magnificent vine from Japan where it grows into trees as here in the Savill Garden's Summer Wood. Easy in most soils. Suitable also for high walls.

2. *Viburnum dilatatum*
A large shrub with colourful berries and richly coloured leaves. Suitable for most soils in sun or semi-shade.

3. *Alstroemeria* 'Flaming Star'
A hardy perennial of exceptional value, this bears flowers over a long period, from May to September. Suitable for most soils in full sun.

4. *Xanthorhiza simplicissima*
Low-growing shrub with creeping rootstock forming colonies of erect stems sporting large leaves. Sun or semi-shade, as at Savill.

5. *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus'
This big, bold grass grows up to 2.2m tall. Its large, feathery, silvery plumes fade to pale cream. Full sun, most soils.

6. *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*
This elegant tree has pretty, toothed leaves in delicate tints of yellow and pink, with a whiff of burnt sugar when fading. Sun or semi-shade; moist soil.

7. *Acer palmatum*
Japanese maples grow throughout the garden. They provide some of the most brilliant colours at this season. Sun or semi-shade, preferably moist soils.

8. *Meliosma veitchiorum*
A Chinese tree of great distinction, with splendid foliage, often colouring spectacularly in the autumn.

9. *Chionochloa conspicua*
Tough clump-forming grass whose large panicles of slender-stalked spikelets have a silvery, beaded appearance. Grow in full sun, in most soils.

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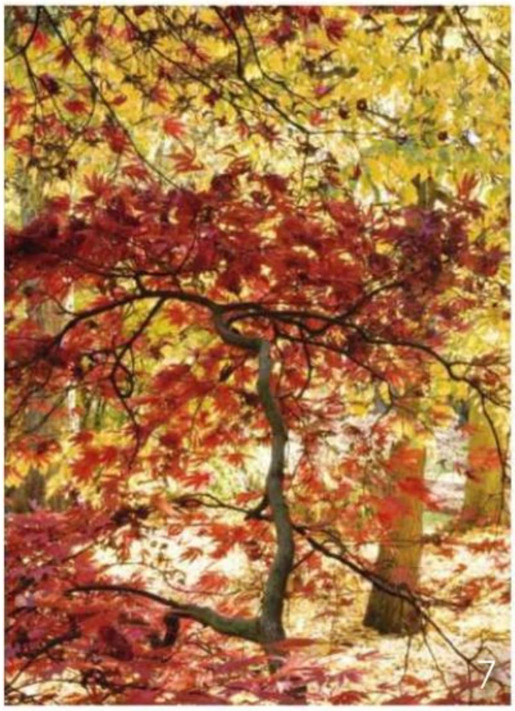

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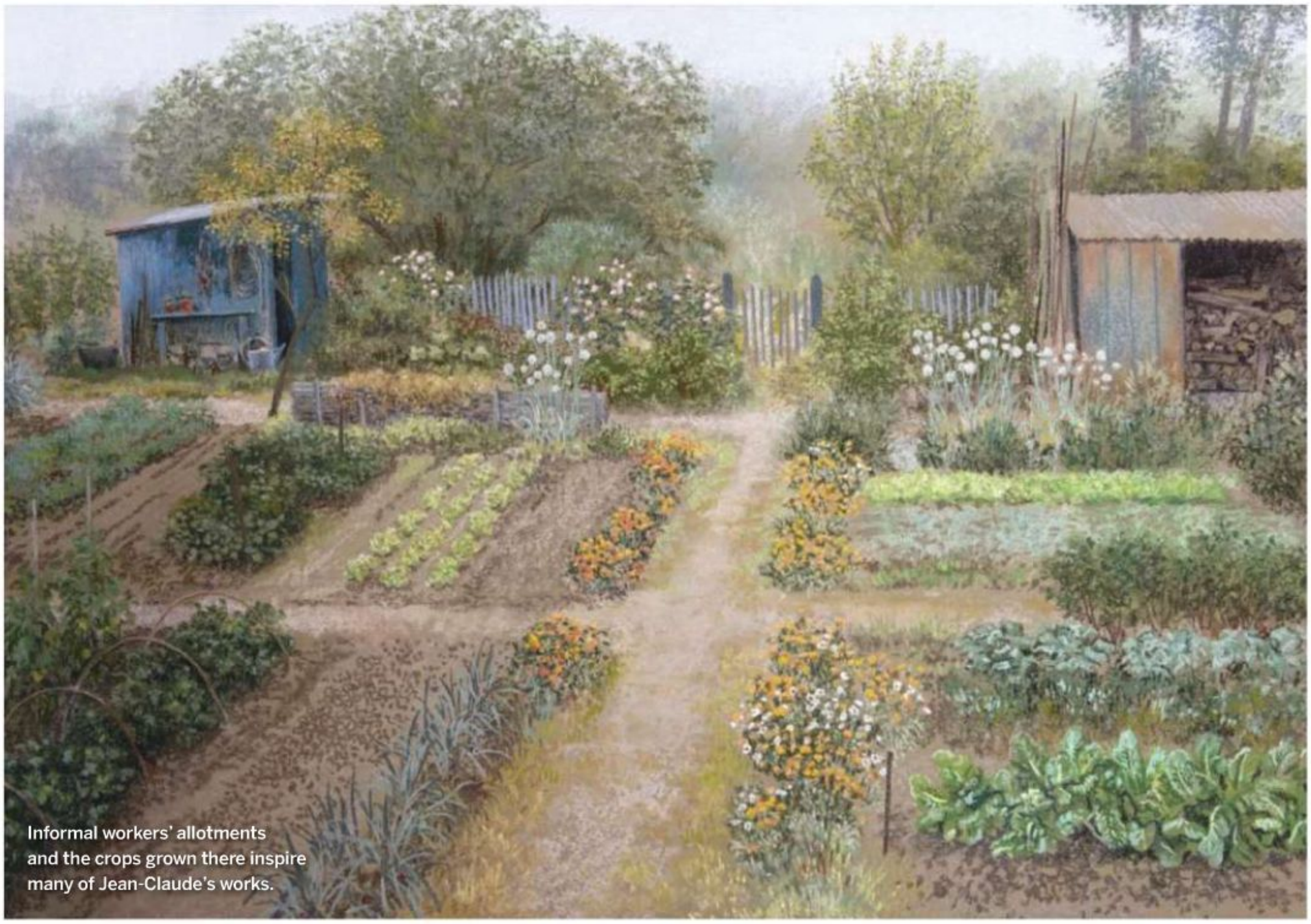


Informal workers' allotments and the crops grown there inspire many of Jean-Claude's works.

Quietly charismatic

Peaceful allotment scenes become remarkably poetic in the hands of Jean-Claude Courtat

WORDS JINNY BLOM PHOTOGRAPHS CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Jean-Claude Courtat is a man of immense charm. Like his pastels he gradually casts a spell that draws one in. It is rare to find figurative painters these days, and especially one openly committed to such modest subject matter.

I first saw his work at Courson, the 'French Chelsea', where he regularly has a stand in the old stable block. Along one wall I became aware of a series of subtle pastel drawings. A vast Savoy cabbage, intact with all its outer leaves painstakingly reproduced, tinged with yellow and holey from strong-stomached slugs. Next to this a beautiful, tender branch of a pear tree, a ripe 'Bon Chrétien' showing the slight bruising and mottling that makes these fruit so beautiful. I could almost smell it. A pollarded willow with a bit of old chestnut paling fence at the base and a dark and brooding sky behind.

I wandered off. Five minutes later I was back. The willow wouldn't leave me alone. I began to look properly at the pastels. Allotments, rows of cabbages, corrugated tin sheds with bits of polythene tied on with string, old recycled wine crates as seed boxes. Rendered poetically in soft, muted colours, the evidence of uncomplicated domestic lives.

The urge to buy the willow became stronger, the show was closing and no one was to be seen near the stand. I finally unearthed Jean-Claude in a crepuscular recess in the stables, smiling quietly when I said I'd like to buy the willow and agreeing I could collect it later in the year from his studio in Boulogne, Paris.

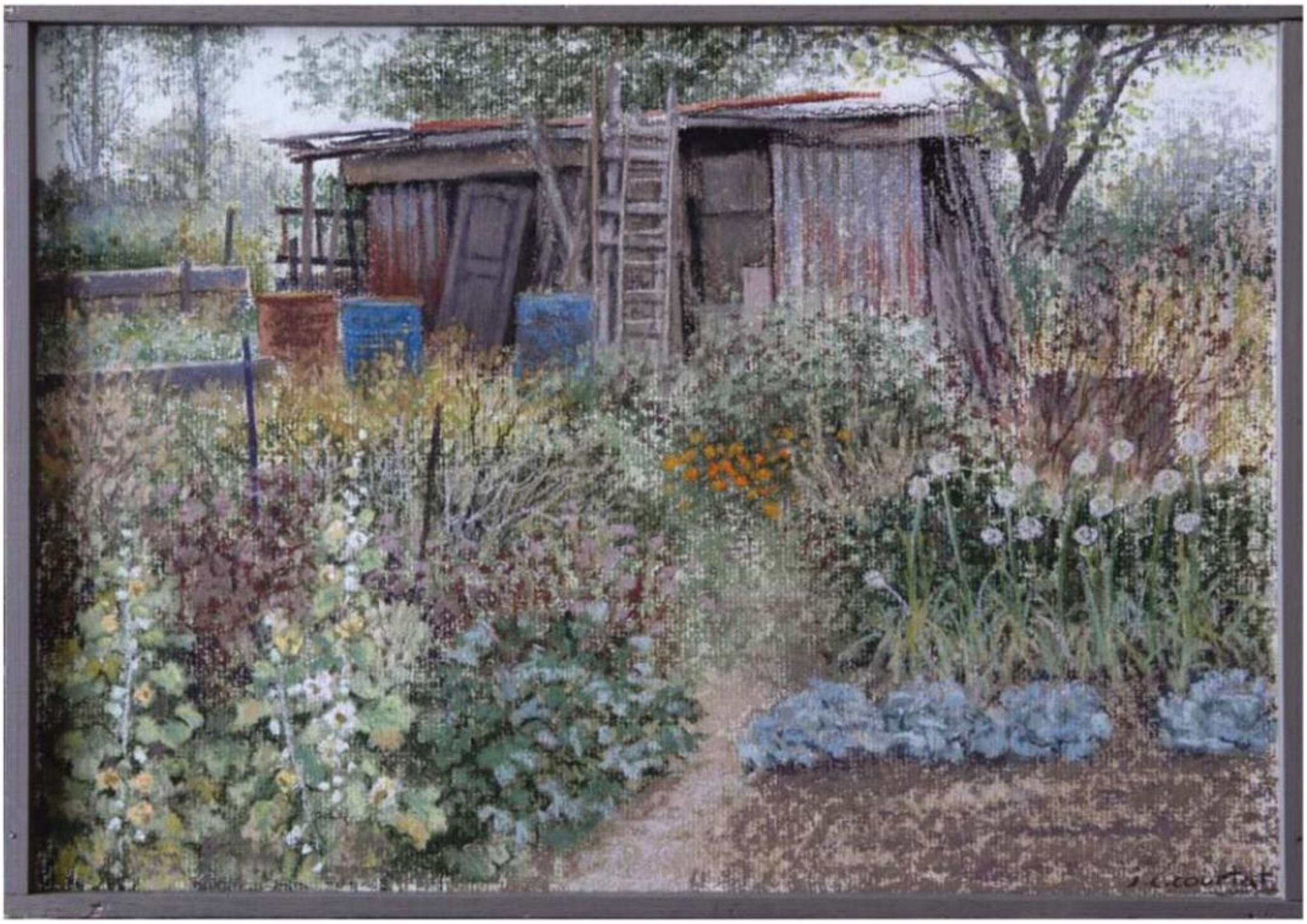
A born artist

Jean-Claude studied fine art and was a professor of painting throughout his adult life, citing his heroes as Braques, Rembrandt and Claude Lorraine. He drew almost constantly as a child. His acute eye for detail is apparent everywhere in the home and studio he shares with his partner of many years, Annick Bienvenu, also an artist.

Beginning as a figurative painter, from the early 1960s Jean-Claude moved into abstraction. His works from this period are ▷

Jean-Claude says he loves using pastels and watercolours because they allow him to work quickly.

The artist keeps his Paris studio immaculately tidy. LEFT His huge collection of *objets* includes these framed vintage seed packets.



> *“Jean-Claude starts each work with a faint sketch in charcoal and then builds layer upon layer of colour. He says that's why he chooses pastels – he can work quickly without waiting for layers to dry”*

▷ exquisite and with a palpable reverence for nature. Using sand and earth mixed with pigment, he created textural yet subtle and serene works. Serenity is a mark of the man and permeates all he touches.

By the early 1970s Jean-Claude was struggling with abstraction. He entered what he charmingly refers to, with a twinkling smile, as his “époque de doute”. One can safely assume that this was a difficult time creatively. He assuaged the discomfort by collecting, and now has the most covetable collection of ‘objects’ I've ever seen. Toy trains, enamel seed labels, seed packets, chickens (lots of chickens), die-cast cars, photographs of disappearing French heritage such as fishermen's huts and billboards. And he is an incredibly good photographer.

Fresh inspiration

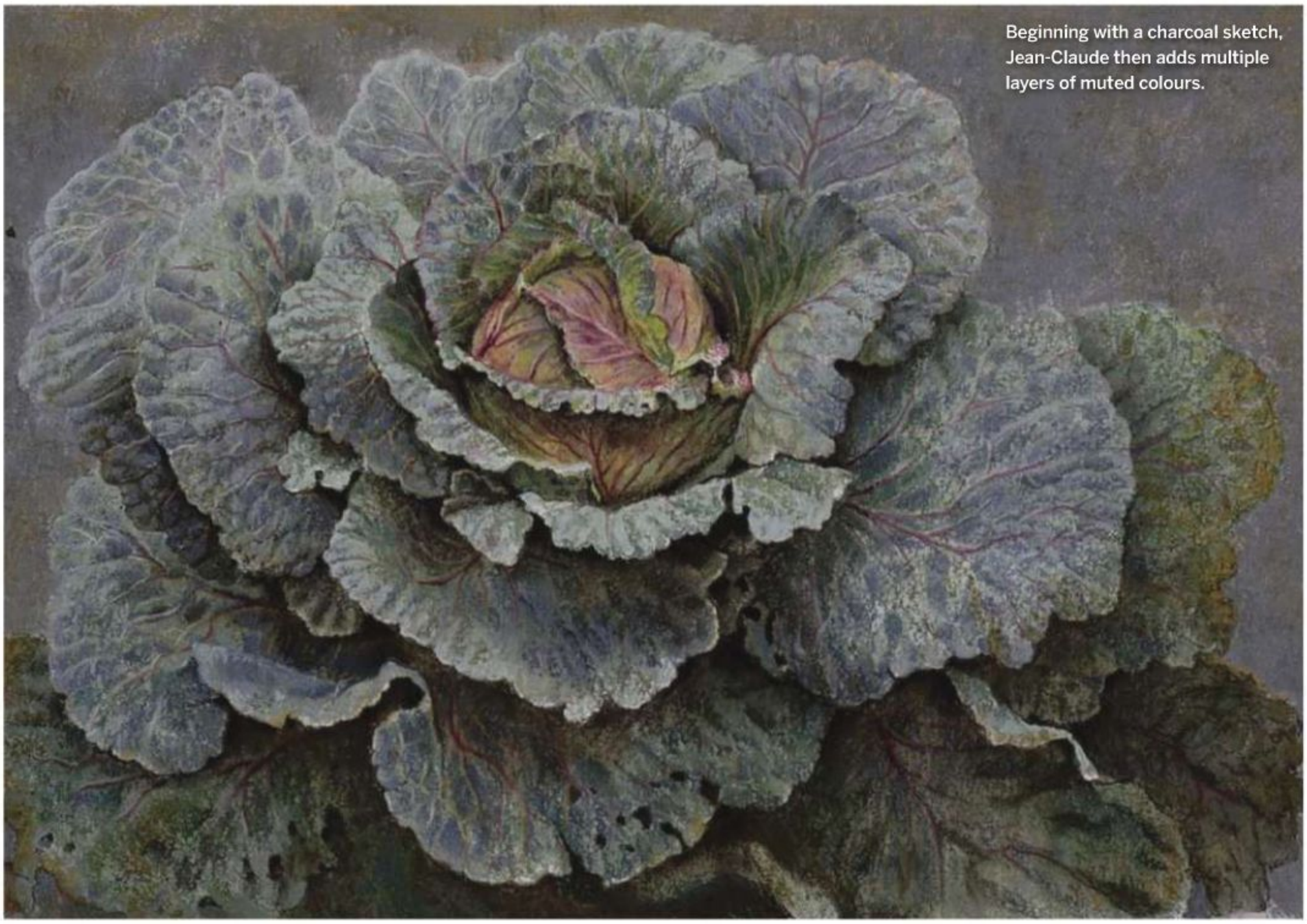
In the early 1980s Jean-Claude gradually returned to watercolours and pastels, encouraged by Annick. He felt a compulsive pull towards the intimate life of villages, workers' allotments, the small and necessary creations of ordinary lives and, of course, nature.

Jean-Claude's colour sense is calm. He has the full collection of dry pastels but finds he just can't use the “couleurs vif” – strong blues, greens and reds – erring towards the dusty shades instead. He starts each work with a faint sketch in charcoal and then builds layer upon layer of colour. He says that's why he chooses pastels – he can work quickly without waiting for layers to dry. His compositions are just that. He doesn't make portraits of existing places but blends fragments he has seen and remembered together, like collage. This is perhaps where his work gains its ethereal quality, slightly out of time yet completely believable.

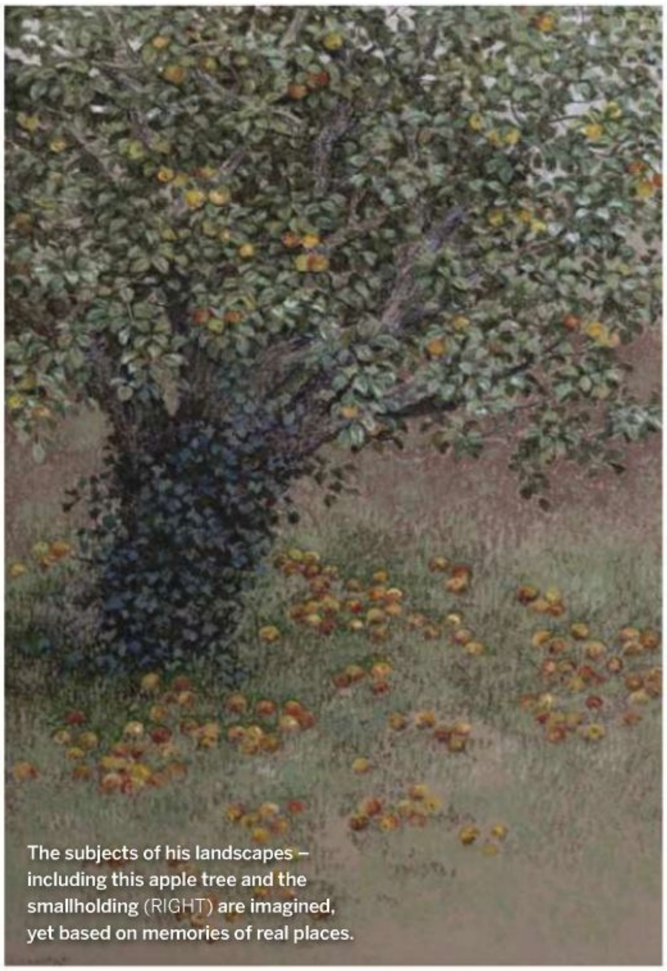
Jean-Claude has a committed following and his works are not long on show before being snapped up at quite grown-up prices. He works to commission but prefers, quite understandably, some liberty in choosing what he draws. One gets the impression he likes to be left to his own devices. He is currently working on a long folding work that he calls “an accordion book” of his willow pollards. The length of the river? I ask, and he nods, laughing.□

USEFUL INFORMATION

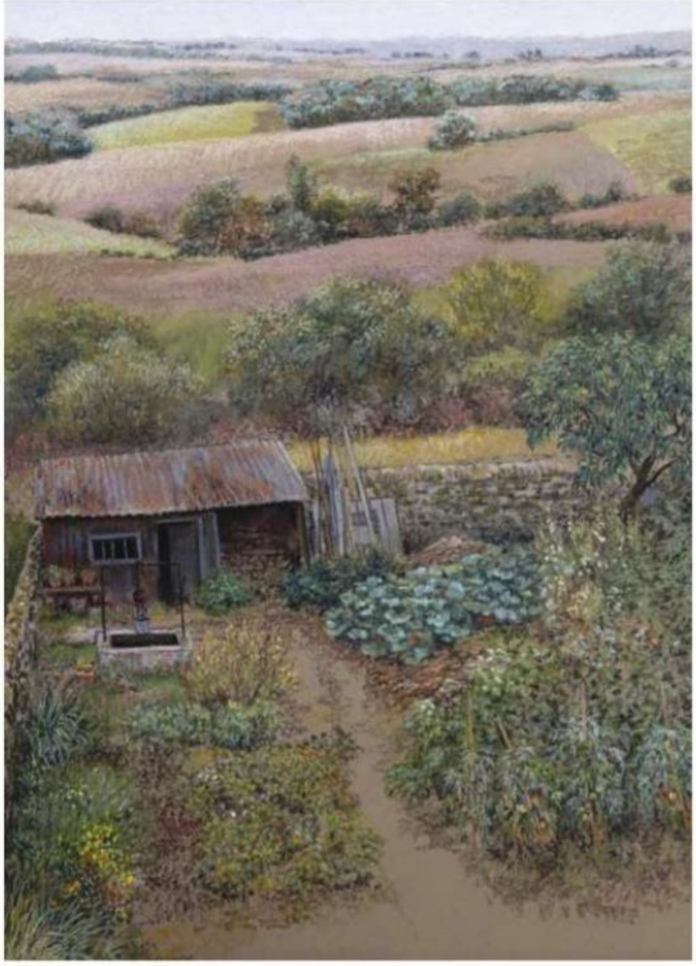
Jean-Claude Courtat can be contacted by email at jccourtat@orange.fr He will be displaying some of his latest works at Les Journées des Plantes, at Courson, about 25 miles southwest of Paris, on 15-17 October. Domaine de Courson, 91680 Courson-Monteloup, France. Tel +33 1 64 58 90 1, www.domaine-de-courson.fr/



Beginning with a charcoal sketch, Jean-Claude then adds multiple layers of muted colours.



The subjects of his landscapes – including this apple tree and the smallholding (RIGHT) are imagined, yet based on memories of real places.



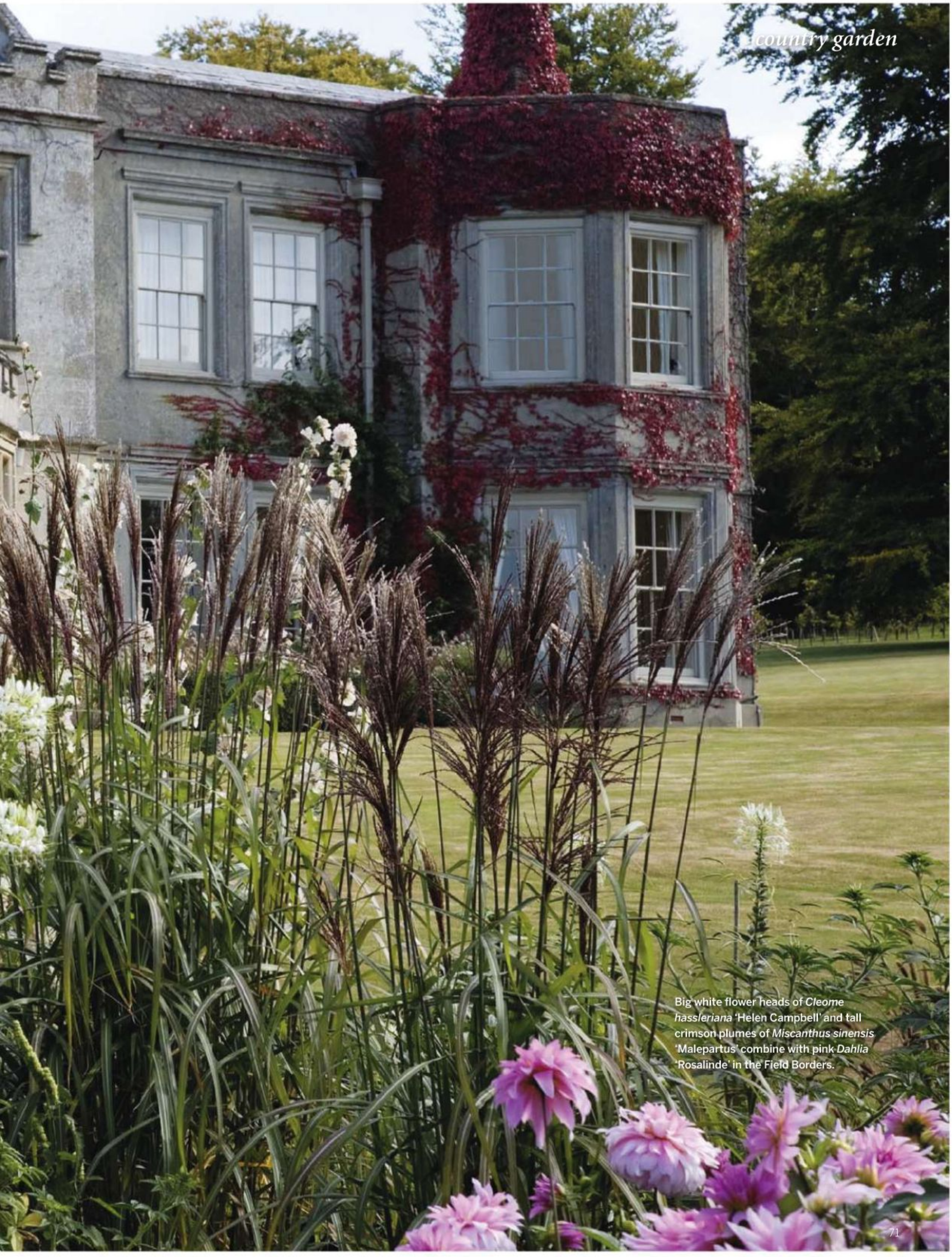
In brief

WHAT **Private gardens to a late Georgian neo-Gothic home.**
WHERE **Berkshire.**
SIZE **Four acres.**
SOIL **Alkaline soil. Chalk limestone in parts, other areas clay.**
CONDITIONS **Bright but windy, protected in places by walls or espalier apples and hornbeams.**
POINTS OF INTEREST **Herbaceous borders, topiary, mature trees, kitchen garden, glasshouse; designed by owner Sean Swallow.**
MAP **See page 72.**

Gothic revival

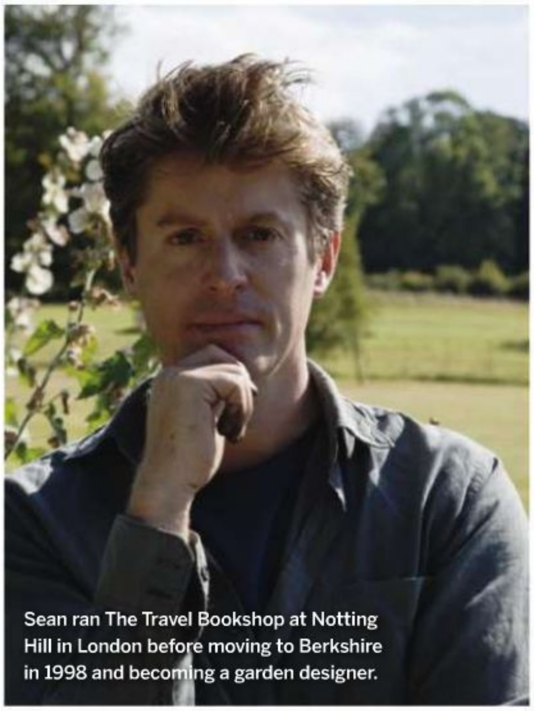
Garden designer Sean Swallow has transformed the garden of his Berkshire home with planting that looks vibrant from spring until the first frosts and beyond

WORDS **CLEVE WEST** PHOTOGRAPHS **FIONA MCLEOD**



Big white flower heads of *Cleome hassleriana* 'Helen Campbell' and tall crimson plumes of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus' combine with pink *Dahlia* 'Rosalinde' in the Field Borders.

Shrewdly placed box balls and small clipped trees punctuate the lawns that sweep up to the house.



Sean ran The Travel Bookshop at Notting Hill in London before moving to Berkshire in 1998 and becoming a garden designer.

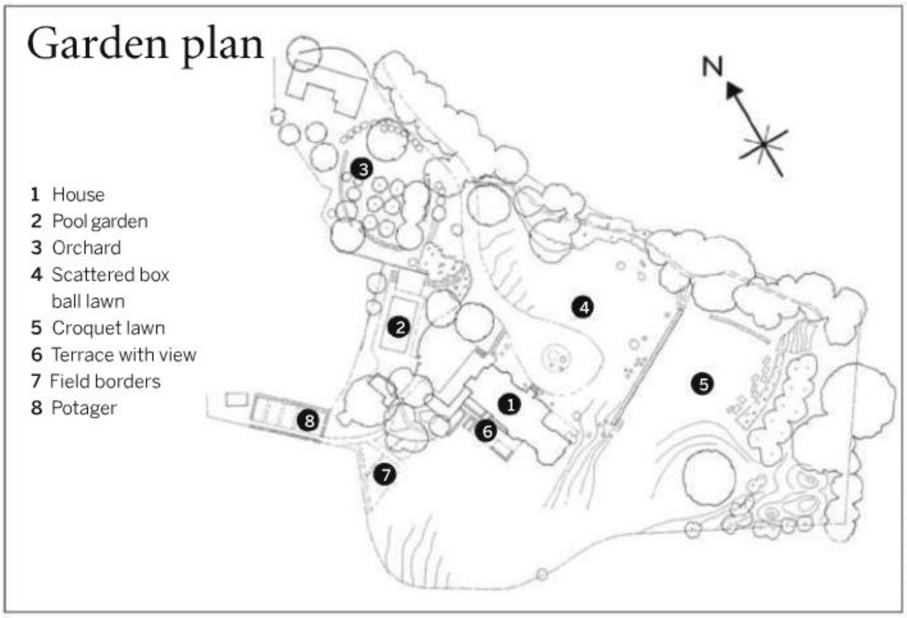
Sean Swallow's home is a stunning Gothic-revival house with fine views across the Lambourne Valley. Built around 1825, it was the village's vicarage but became a private home in the early 20th century. With mullioned windows, gargoyles and an embattled parapet, the potentially indigestible nature of this decorative style of architecture is not for the faint-hearted, but the house is comfortable in its setting and imbues a reassuring permanence, quietly celebrating a time steeped in eccentricity.

Creating a garden on such a canvas, one would be forgiven for suffering stage fright, so when Sean Swallow bought the house in 1998 with his partner Tim, he took time to consider his options.

The first five years were spent assessing the garden and taking out the negatives. "There were loads of island beds and there had been lots of plonking of trees," he remembers. "There were balustrades everywhere and the garden lacked a cohesive structure."

The uneven slope on which the house rests was another potential problem but Sean saw this as chance to exploit its dynamism. He sees the house as both ugly and beautiful; big, too, for the land it occupies. He uses this as an excuse to be playful, a scattering of box balls at the front of the house resembling a forgotten game of marbles. Its closest boundary, an old and wild box-hedge tamed and trimmed into 'drunken balls', verges on buxus-overload but seeing that the garden is a paradise for deer and rabbits (who find the plant unpalatable) it serves the garden well.

Garden plan



PLAN BY SEAN SWALLOW

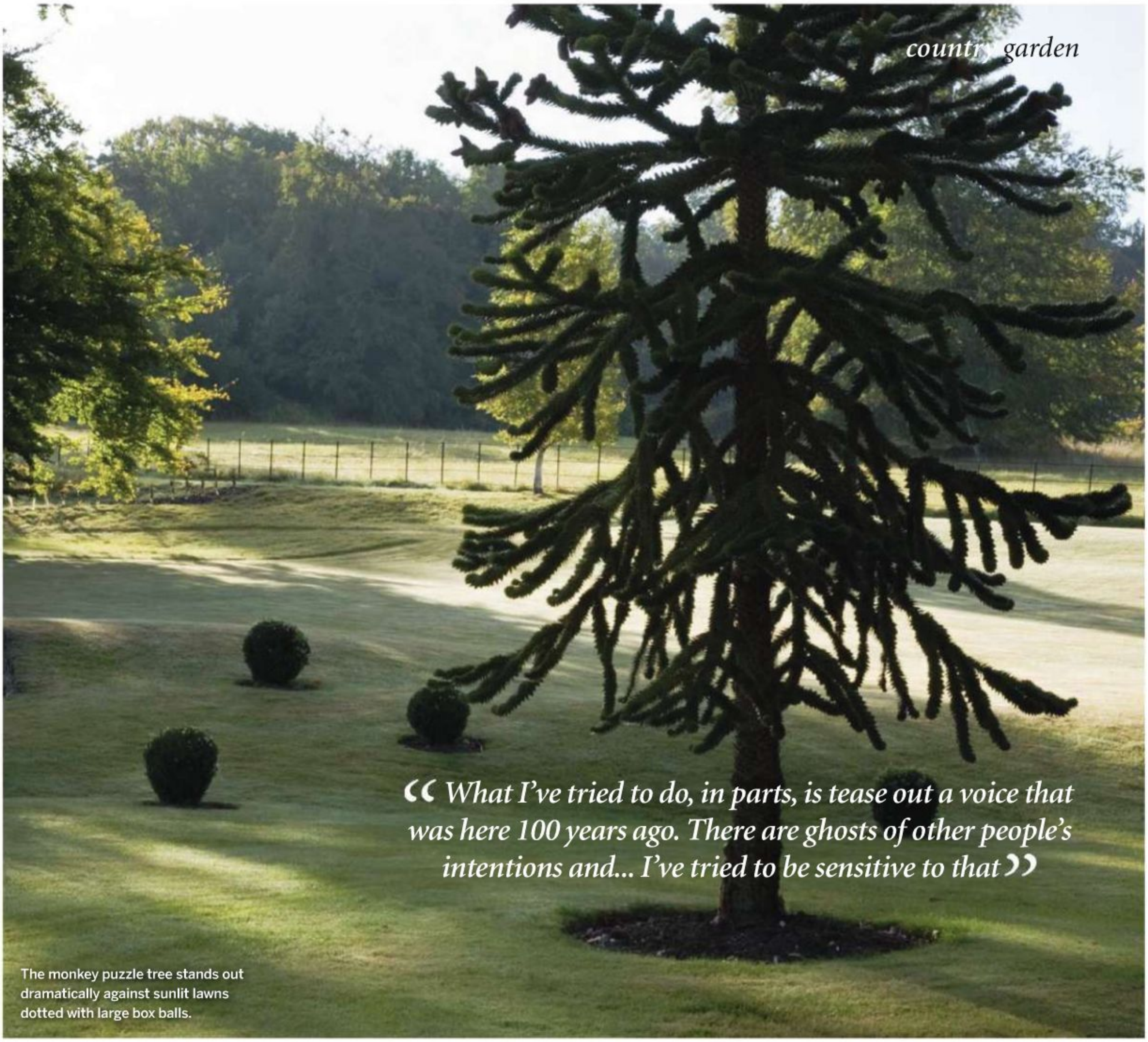
Beyond the house, the land sweeps up past a croquet lawn to a paddock and wood, a large beech providing the fulcrum. This and other trees – holm oaks and horse chestnuts – suggest to Sean that someone once had a plan for the place. Yew trees near the house, old cyclamens in clumps "the size of loaves" and colonies of daffodils that Sean thinks camp; this planted legacy seems to express the tastes of every generation for the last 200 years. "What I've tried to do, in parts, is tease out a voice that was here 100 years ago," he says. "There are ghosts of other people's intentions and, while I've made bold decisions, I've tried to be sensitive to that."

Plant first, ask questions later

Hard-landscaping has taken a back seat while Sean concentrates on planting. Undogmatic horticulturally but a disciple of Beth Chatto's 'right plant, right place' philosophy (using species that will naturally thrive in the conditions), Sean's palette is tastefully restrained for the most part, but where there is a gap between perennials he drops in brilliantly coloured annuals such as zinnias and sunflowers, which gives some areas a more flamboyant look.

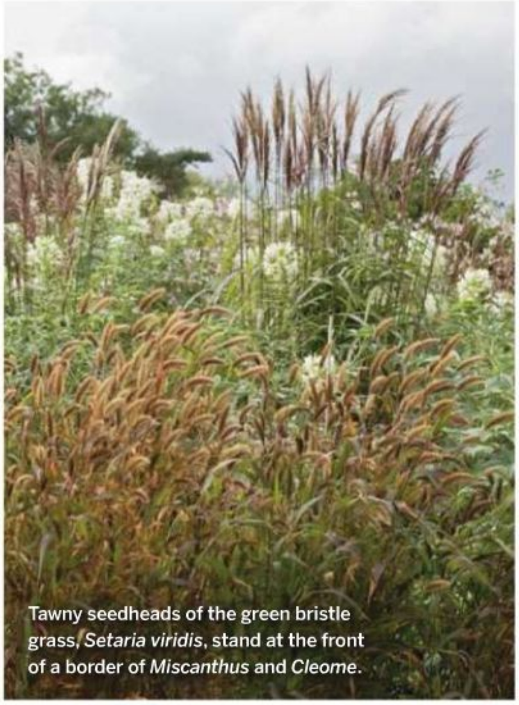
To the rear of the property the garden breathes more deeply as it takes in views toward the Lambourne river. The connection between house and landscape is indisputable and the light – fresh and intoxicating – is as seductive as it gets for any plantsman. "The views across the Lambourne Valley put me in my place," reflects Sean, who has been careful not to detract from it in any way. Bold blocks of planting in a stone terrace

▷

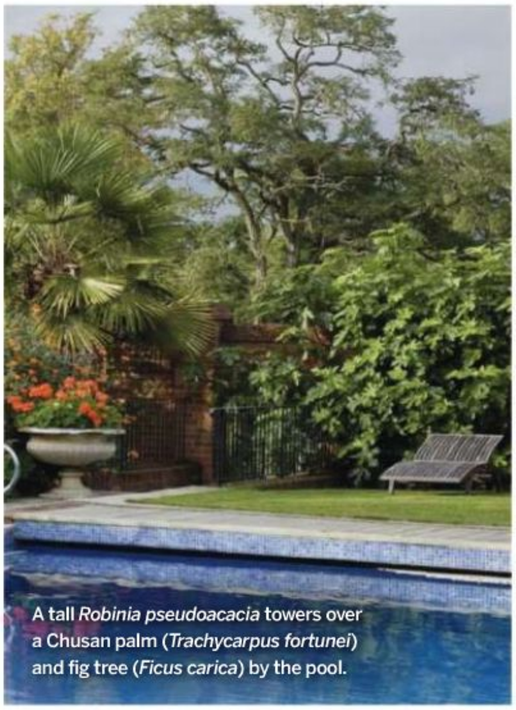


> “What I’ve tried to do, in parts, is tease out a voice that was here 100 years ago. There are ghosts of other people’s intentions and… I’ve tried to be sensitive to that”

The monkey puzzle tree stands out dramatically against sunlit lawns dotted with large box balls.

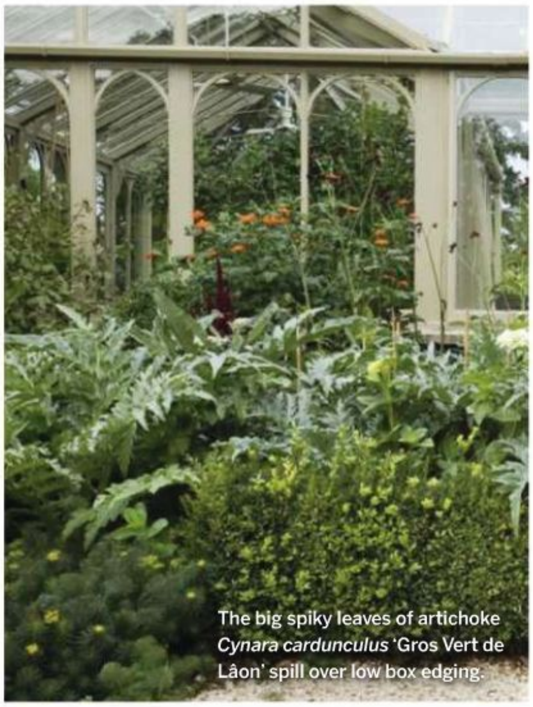


Tawny seedheads of the green bristle grass, *Setaria viridis*, stand at the front of a border of *Miscanthus* and *Cleome*.



A tall *Robinia pseudoacacia* towers over a Chusan palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) and fig tree (*Ficus carica*) by the pool.

A drift of drumstick allium (*A. sphaerocephalon*) seedheads rustles in the softest breeze.



The big spiky leaves of artichoke *Cynara cardunculus* 'Gros Vert de Lâon' spill over low box edging.

Espalier fruit trees and marigolds (*Calendula officinalis* 'Radio') thrive in the kitchen garden.

> *"The connection between house and landscape is indisputable and the light – fresh and intoxicating – is as seductive as it gets for any plantsman"*

▷ might change from year to year depending on just how much time Sean has to experiment. A sea of *Panicum virgatum* 'Rehbraun' with splashes of bright *Zinnia* 'Benary's Giant Deep Red' acts as a veil in front of south-facing windows; another bed hosts a phalanx of sunflowers, while bleached seedheads are reminders of a sumptuous crop of *Allium sphaerocephalon*. Box-framed beds explode with artichoke 'Gros Vert de Lâon' (above), a simple but dramatic planting in front of a glasshouse full of tomatoes and *Cobaea scandens*.

Planting contrasts

Away from the terrace, almost out of view, are the Field Borders. Here, a tapestry of perennials, grasses and annuals layered around cleverly distorted waves of box guide you to a kitchen garden (above right). The hollyhock relative x *Alcalthaea suffrutescens* 'Parkallee' provides vertical notes among *Agastache urticifolia* 'Alba', *Ageratina altissima* 'Braunlaub' and *Nicotiana mutabilis*, the buttons of *Sanguisorba officinalis* reliably adding the extra texture that seems to make everything hang together. *Cleome hassleriana* 'Helen Campbell' froths among the dusky brown flowers of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus', and the smaller annual (and invasive) grass *Setaria viridis* is a handy 'front of house' edging plant where the border meets lawn.

A detour through a copse of conifers brings you to the pool garden, where *Canna* 'Orange Punch' and *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch' set the pace for colour, happy among the exotic buffer of begonias, hostas and *Ricinis communis* 'Zanzibariensis'. The flamboyancy is deftly handled and the energy expressed cleverly balanced by bold volumes of foliage such as glory flower (*Clerodendron bungei*) and Indian pokeweed (*Phytolacca acinosa*). The shoo-fly plant, *Nicandra physalodes*, is a delightful curio.

The path ahead

The garden continues to evolve and Sean has the equivalent of full-time help from a great team of part-timers. He even opened the garden to the public under the National Gardens Scheme in 2009 and 2010 (although there are no plans to open in 2011). Despite being apprehensive at first, Sean was delighted with the public's reaction, which he says motivated him and helped confirm that some things were working – particularly the *empty* spaces, which Sean himself is drawn to. That's an odd benchmark by which to gauge the success of a garden, perhaps, but one that reveals a sensitivity for the pauses and time-warp moments that make a garden much more than just a sum of its parts.□

Late season stars from Sean's garden

Sean Swallow chooses his nine favourite plants as summer turns to autumn

1. *Clerodendrum bungei*
The leaves are a useful foil and the late blooms have a contained cheeriness. Bright shade, sheltered under a tree is best.

2. *Begonia grandis* subsp. *evansiana* var. *alba*
So, begonias are ugly, eh? They aren't for everyone, and they suit a Gothic house. The leaf shape is bold but the flowers softly flush pink and the leaf veins are red.

3. *Begonia sutherlandii*
Possesses a delicacy in the leaf form that the genus perhaps isn't known for, and the orange flowers look alert.

4. *Nicotiana mutabilis*
Sometimes listed as unscented – but after warm rain they have a distinct candy-shop smell that has us reaching for our brollies.

5. *Phytolacca acinosa*
A voluminous plant, Indian pokeweed has large, well-spaced and upward-reaching leaves that cast interesting shadows, and shiny black fruits late in the season.

6. *Nicotiana tabacum*
The huge green leaves of the common tobacco plant contrast with dahlias – oddly, the trick with tropical borders is to keep them calm and contain the heat.

7. x *Alcalthaea suffrutescens* 'Parkallee'
Brought to my attention years ago by Chris and Toby Marchant – how lucky we are to have nursery people of their calibre.

8. *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch'
A good Buddhist orange with exactly the right amount of red in it – just right against an autumn sky.

9. *Cleome hassleriana* 'Helen Campbell'
This plant loves us even more than *I* love *it*, as deer won't go any where near it.

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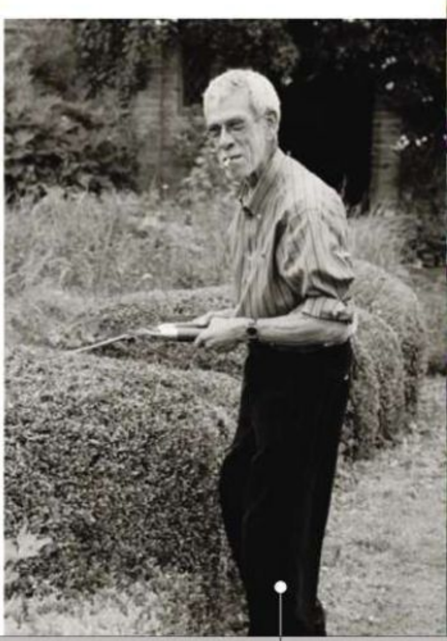
The garden of Ton ter Linden at Ruinen was the first of the 'Dutch Wave' gardens to attract interest in the UK.

Piet Oudolf (left) in his garden with then *Gardeners' World* presenter Stephen Lacey and film crew, in 1997.

Quirky topiary and elegant ornamental grasses were a distinctive feature of Henk Gerritsen's garden at Priona.



Henk Gerritsen used his extensive knowledge of plants to create a relaxed, 'natural' garden at Priona. He died in 2008.

The Dutch wave

How plantsmen and designers from the Netherlands are helping to transform gardens and parks in Britain

WORDS CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD

"It was the most electrifying planting I have ever seen", remembers garden writer Stephen Lacey. "The borders were like Impressionist meadows."

In the 1990s the garden created by painter Ton ter Linden in the northern Netherlands was the first of a new generation of Dutch gardens to capture the English imagination. The next 'discovery' was Henk Gerritsen's garden at Priona, with abstract topiary, brassica hole-punched by butterflies, and weeds growing side by side with dahlias. Drive an hour and half further and you came to the garden and nursery of Piet and Anja Oudolf, where you could buy "wild-looking perennials" – in the words of nurseryman John Coke – and salvias in colours you had never seen. In the borders, it was rumoured, he had succeeded in mixing grasses with perennials.

At Hummelo the Oudolfs' Garden Days assembled the new generation of Dutch growers who exchanged plants and discoveries – and talked, led by Rob Leopold, a poet and philosopher who in 1978 had begun to sell seeds for wild flowers and native plants grown at his tumble-down farmhouse. Piet says: "Rob, Henk and I talked for hours and hours about the ideal garden, and how you could translate nature into a garden."

A Swedish botanist called the movement 'The Dutch Wave'. But was it a movement? Ton, Henk and Piet were

PHOTOLIBRARY, JERRY HARPUR / HARPUR GARDEN IMAGES, COURTESY PIET OUDOLF, COURTESY PRIONA FOUNDATION, CHARLIE HOPKINSON, WALTER HERFST

Drifts of grasses and perennials fill Piet Oudolf's garden at Hummelo with washes of rich colour.

three visionary, self-taught and strong-willed individuals who began their separate gardens long before they met each other.

Perhaps it's better described as a rebellion. "Rob Leopold was an old hippy," recalls Noël Kingsbury, fondly. Jacqueline van der Kloet left her landscape architecture course because "It was all rules. 'Never plant 2, 4, 6' we were told. 'Plant 1, 5, 7'. In a border tall plants must go at the back, and short plants at the front. I wanted a more natural way of using plants."

But there *were* shared characteristics. They were ecological, with ideas derived from the German science of habitat planting. They allowed plants to self-seed. Their plants were designed to be sustainable. They were gardens of spontaneity, and movement. There was a new, more fluid relationship between plants and design. Above all, they asked gardeners to loosen their grip on nature.

In 1994 Stephen Lacey, with designers Tim Rees and Brita von Schoenaich, organised a sell-out symposium at Kew, dominated by German speakers. It was a turning-point in British garden history. And two years later a second conference took place in Arnhem.

Shock of the new

But what made the discovery of these gardens and nurseries so exciting? English gardeners were much more inward-looking, remembers John Coke, and Piet "opened our eyes to new possibilities". "GARDENS ILLUSTRATED was hugely important," adds writer and designer Tania Compton, "and its photography blew everyone away. We suddenly discovered what was happening abroad." Plus, the nurseries had created a new generation of discerning plant buyers who wanted to pick out perennials. "You could buy veronicastrums, thalictrums, echinaceas and grasses," says Tania.

Brita came to England in 1981. For the next decade, she says, "nothing changed in English gardens." Design was dominated by the country house cult, and the pictorial gardens exemplified by Rosemary Verey. "But after Mrs Thatcher people wanted something new."

Noël agrees that by the early 1990s there was a hunger for change. "And I'd had enough of our fixation that the country house was the apex of a designer's achievement. I went to Europe to see design for the people." For Piet, a park matters more than a private garden and his collaboration with landscape architecture practice Field Operations on the High Line in New York is the most successful public project of the century. ▷

Henk Gerritsen's "dream of nature" at Waltham Place in Berkshire included sweeps of tall grasses and perennials.

Garden designer Dan Pearson (centre) with nurseryman John Coke (right) and Anja Oudolf (left) at Home Farm.

Piet Oudolf created these naturalistic plantings in the Millennium Gardens at Pensthorpe in Norfolk in 2000.

Oudolf's first project in England was Bury Court, the Hampshire garden of John Coke, planted in 1997.

> *" Piet and Henk showed an English audience that there is a third type of garden in addition to our traditional zones of 'wild' and 'ornamental' "*

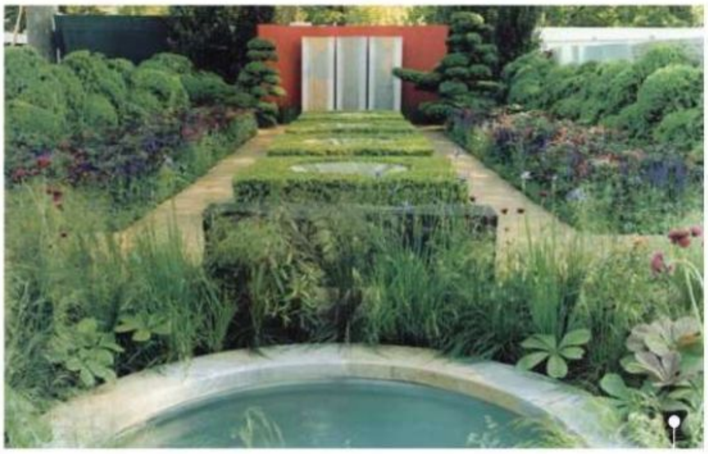
▷ Piet's first garden in England was commissioned by John Coke at Bury Court in Hampshire and was recognised by RHS journal *The Garden* as "a whole new style of gardening for the Millennium". For the first time since the late 17th century – yes, when the first Dutch Wave hit our shores – a foreigner was the most in-demand designer in Britain. After a Gold Medal at Chelsea (for GARDENS ILLUSTRATED in 2000, with Arne Maynard) came the borders at RHS Wisley in Surrey and the walled garden at Scampston Hall in Yorkshire.

And Henk? In 1999 the wealthy South African gardener Strilli Oppenheimer visited Priona and fell in love with its spirit; "I'd always loved what English gardeners call weeds," she says. Immediately Strilli understood that the label 'wild garden' does not do justice to Priona. "Henk knew more about plants than anyone I have ever met." After all, he had spent 20 years travelling to diverse habitats, from Switzerland to Afghanistan.

Henk and Strilli transformed the Oppenheimers' 1930s formal garden at Waltham Place in Berkshire into a garden unprecedented in England: what Henk called "a dream of nature".

Piet describes his approach as a "sensation" of nature. Together, he and Henk showed an English audience that there is a third type of garden in addition to our traditional zones of "wild" and "ornamental". The Dutch Wave gardens coincided with a desire to make gardens in a new balance with nature. The Dutch are pilgrims to Essex plantswoman Beth Chatto, and Rosie Atkins, then editor of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, took

NICOLA BROWNE / GAP PHOTOS, COURTESY PIET OUDOLF X2, NICOLA BROWNE / GAP PHOTOS, HOWARD SOOLEY, CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS, VBDVSL / ALAMY, ANDREW LAWSON



The Floral Labyrinth garden is among several acres of planting by Oudolf and Tom Stuart-Smith at Trentham in Staffordshire (2006).

Oudolf and English designer Arne Maynard won Best in Show at Chelsea 2000 for the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED garden.

The High Line – a linear park in New York city, opened in 2009 – is one of several major projects by Oudolf in the USA.

Drifts of plants in the 140m double borders at RHS Wisley in Surrey, planted in 2001, are typical of Oudolf's work.

the Oudolfs to meet the young garden designer Dan Pearson at one of his projects, Home Farm in Northamptonshire. "This is really something," said Piet.

In 1998 garden writer Derek Fell wrote in *The American Nurseryman*: "I have seen the future and it is Holland." *Is* the future orange? John Coke emphasises that the Dutch – and Piet, in particular – have hugely expanded the range of hardy perennials available to, and aesthetically acceptable to, the English gardener. "Who on earth had heard of *Veronicastrum* in 1996?" asks Stephen Lacey. To Noël Kingsbury, however, the most significant legacy of the Dutch Wave is the influence of Rob Leopold's pioneering use of annuals – notably in the seed mixes of Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough at Sheffield University, whose 'urban meadows' seem set to transform open land in many of our cities.

And aesthetics? The Dutch Wave intersected with a new designers such as Tom Stuart-Smith, whose inspired collaboration with Piet Oudolf at Trentham, Staffordshire, is one of the most interesting gardens of our time. And Oudolf's borders at Wisley inspired Sarah Price to become a designer; she's now one of the most promising in her generation. In fact, it's hard to understand modern English design without understanding the Dutch movement. To Stephen Lacey, it's become "the look" for a younger generation of designers who don't want to give clients a traditional mixed border. To John Coke, they have opened individual gardeners' eyes to autumn tones and winter silhouette.

I question, however, whether the Wave has overcome our tradition of design according to pictorial principles: do we still, at heart, believe that plants should take their place in a colour scheme, as Jekyll did when she compared her borders to a painting by Turner? Or can we let the plants make the first move? Piet and Henk were happiest in prairies or on mountainsides, not in other people's gardens. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

EXHIBITION *Going Dutch* explores the history and influence of the 'Dutch Wave'. Entry £6.

DATES 5 October to 20 February 2011.

ADDRESS The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB.

TEL 020 7401 8865

WEBSITE www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

EVENTS A series of talks about the Dutch Wave is also taking place – contact the Garden Museum or see website for details.

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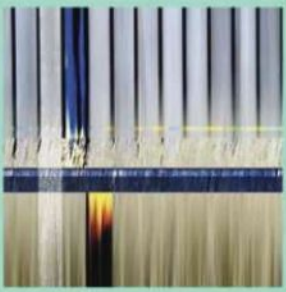

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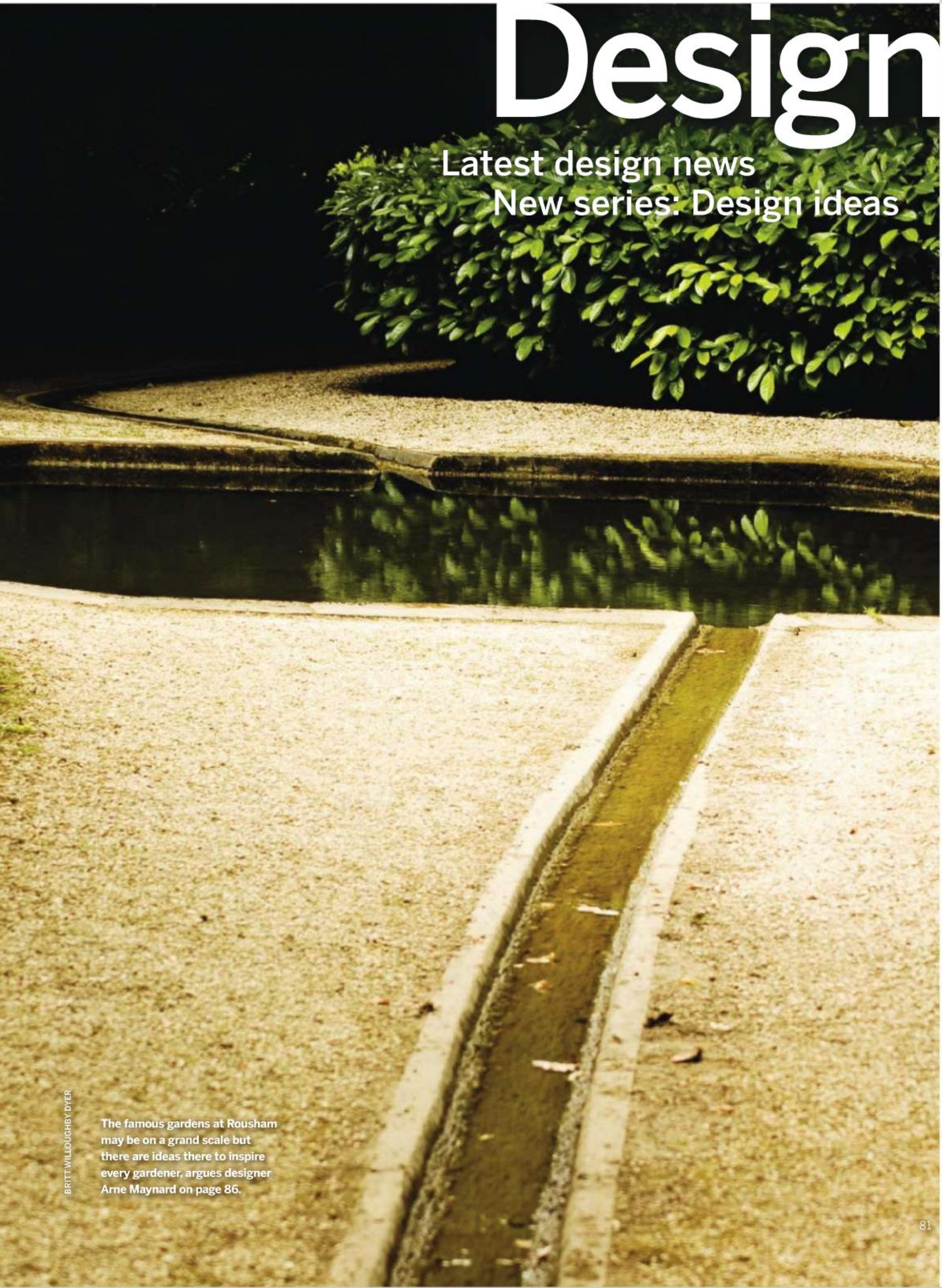

BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

The famous gardens at Rousham may be on a grand scale but there are ideas there to inspire every gardener, argues designer Arne Maynard on page 86.

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- **Beautiful real homes** Be inspired by our selection of town and country houses, plus how to get the look
- ***Antiques Roadshow*** We go behind the scenes to bring you the great stories from the new series
- **Victorian watercolours** *Roadshow* expert Grant Ford on their enduring appeal and insider tips on how to buy

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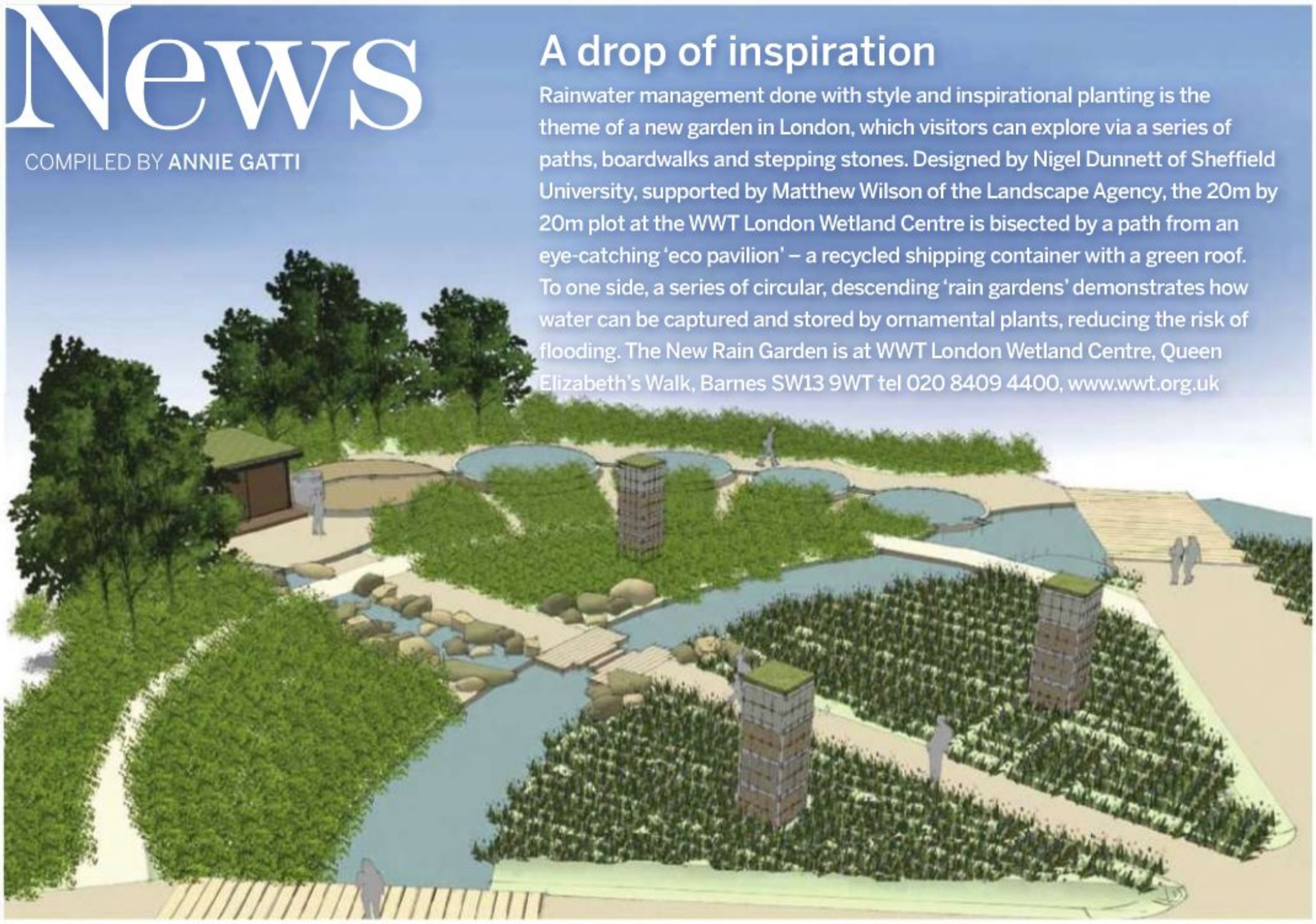
News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**



A drop of inspiration

Rainwater management done with style and inspirational planting is the theme of a new garden in London, which visitors can explore via a series of paths, boardwalks and stepping stones. Designed by Nigel Dunnett of Sheffield University, supported by Matthew Wilson of the Landscape Agency, the 20m by 20m plot at the WWT London Wetland Centre is bisected by a path from an eye-catching 'eco pavilion' – a recycled shipping container with a green roof. To one side, a series of circular, descending 'rain gardens' demonstrates how water can be captured and stored by ornamental plants, reducing the risk of flooding. The New Rain Garden is at WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes SW13 9WT tel 020 8409 4400, www.wwt.org.uk

Originally used for cooking at festivals in India, Wilstone's version of the taditional kadai is a sturdy wrought-iron vessel, with attractive riveting detail on the surface. They have been adapted for use as generous-sized barbecues and handsome free-standing fire bowls that will extend your use of the garden on cooler autumn evenings.

Wilstone's Kadai is fitted with a gauze filter that separates ash from rainwater and so ensures successful burning, and comes with a choice of low or high stand and a set of grills, tongs and wire brush. Prices from £295 to £1,395, depending on size. Tel 01694 771800, www.wilstone.com

AWARDS

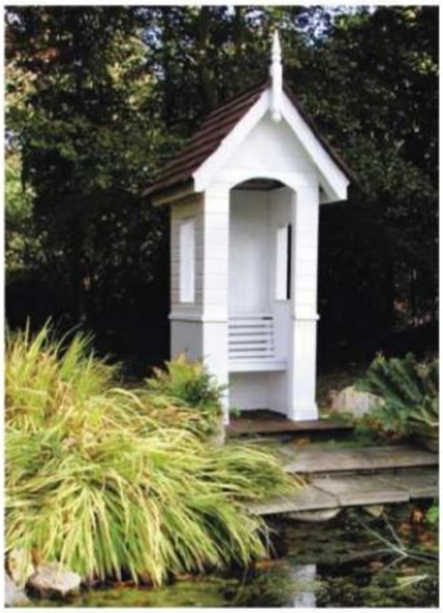
Doyle triumphs

A sympathetic design for a four-acre, rustic property on sloping land has won James Doyle Design Associates the prestigious APLA International Landscape Designer of the Year award 2010. The design makes use of stone walls to create flat garden spaces, while a yew allée links the upper and lower gardens, and repeat plantings of clipped box and hornbeams anchor the spaces around the house. The award will be presented to the practice, based in Greenwich, Connecticut, at the annual conference of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers this month. www.apld.com

GARDEN STRUCTURES

Going solo

Northamptonshire design company William Lloyd specialises in bespoke garden structures made from natural and recycled materials sourced from the UK. This elegant Reading Room (right), ideal for the smaller plot, is made from pine and comes with a shingle roof. It stands on a wooden plinth and at 1m wide makes a perfect retreat for solo reading but can also be made to accommodate two. A summerhouse is also available. Reading Room, 1.2m x .9m, from £3,000; Summer House, 4.5m x 2.4m, from £16,000. William Lloyd, tel 07974 071551, www.williamlloyd.co.uk



A new easy-to-move, modular, plant-growing system based on bag-like planters or 'substrates' is designed to promote biodiversity on roofs and brownfield sites. Pocket Habitats offers four standard recycled substrates pre-seeded with wildflowers suitable for your area.

Each dry bag weighs 20kg and comes with a 15-year warranty. From £45 per square metre. For more details visit www.pockethabitat.co.uk.

PIET OUDOLF GARDEN REPLANTED

Ten years after it was officially opened, the Millennium Garden at Pensthorpe Nature Reserve, Piet Oudolf's first public garden in the UK, has been re-designed and re-planted, using some 8,000 of the original perennials and grasses and 4,000 new plants. The entire one-acre garden has been dug up and congested plants divided. Twenty-eight perennials and two new grasses – *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah' and *Sporobolus heterolepis* – and have been incorporated into the new design. Pensthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN, tel 01328 851465, www.pensthorpe.com

Notebook

- **The 6th Festival Internacional de Jardins** at Ponte de Lima, Portugal, featuring 11 gardens from nine countries, continues until the end of October. Applications for next year's festival – the theme is *The forest in the garden* – should be made by 31 October. www.festivaldejardins.cm-pontedelima.pt.
- **A one-day workshop** that explains how to achieve Registered Designer status through BALI takes place on 22 October at BALI headquarters, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. To book a place, visit www.bali.org.uk.
- **The first Christopher Lloyd Scholarship**, a one-year traineeship in practical horticulture at Great Dixter in Sussex, has been awarded to James Horner, a gardener at Lotherton Hall Bird Garden near Leeds. The scholarship is funded by Friends of Great Dixter and the Historic and Botanic Gardens Bursary Scheme. Enquiries by email to education@greatdixter.co.uk
- **Hugo Bugg, a graduate of Falmouth University** and former Society of Garden Designers Student Designer of the Year, is the second RHS Young Designer of the Year, an award open to designers under 28. His gold medal garden at the Tatton Show won him the chance to shadow the designer of next year's Laurent-Perrier garden at Chelsea.
- **Metal in the garden**, with a focus on rusted metal and copper, is the theme of this year's feature show garden at Grand Designs Live in Birmingham. Speakers at the show include garden designers Matthew Wilson and James Alexander-Sinclair and gardening writer Gay Search. Grand Designs Live, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, 8-10 October. Tel 0871 230 5583, www.granddesignslive.com

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Evergreen Quercus ilex

“ The ingredients are simple: the façade of the beautiful Jacobean house and a broad swathe of velvety, striped grass, framed by huge, mature lime trees ”

The perfect garden

The classic landscape at Rousham is full of brilliant design ideas to inspire you, no matter what size your garden, says Arne Maynard in the first of his new series on garden design

PHOTOGRAPHS BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

ARNE MAYNARD is a designer whose busy London practice creates gardens all over the world. He lives in Monmouthshire

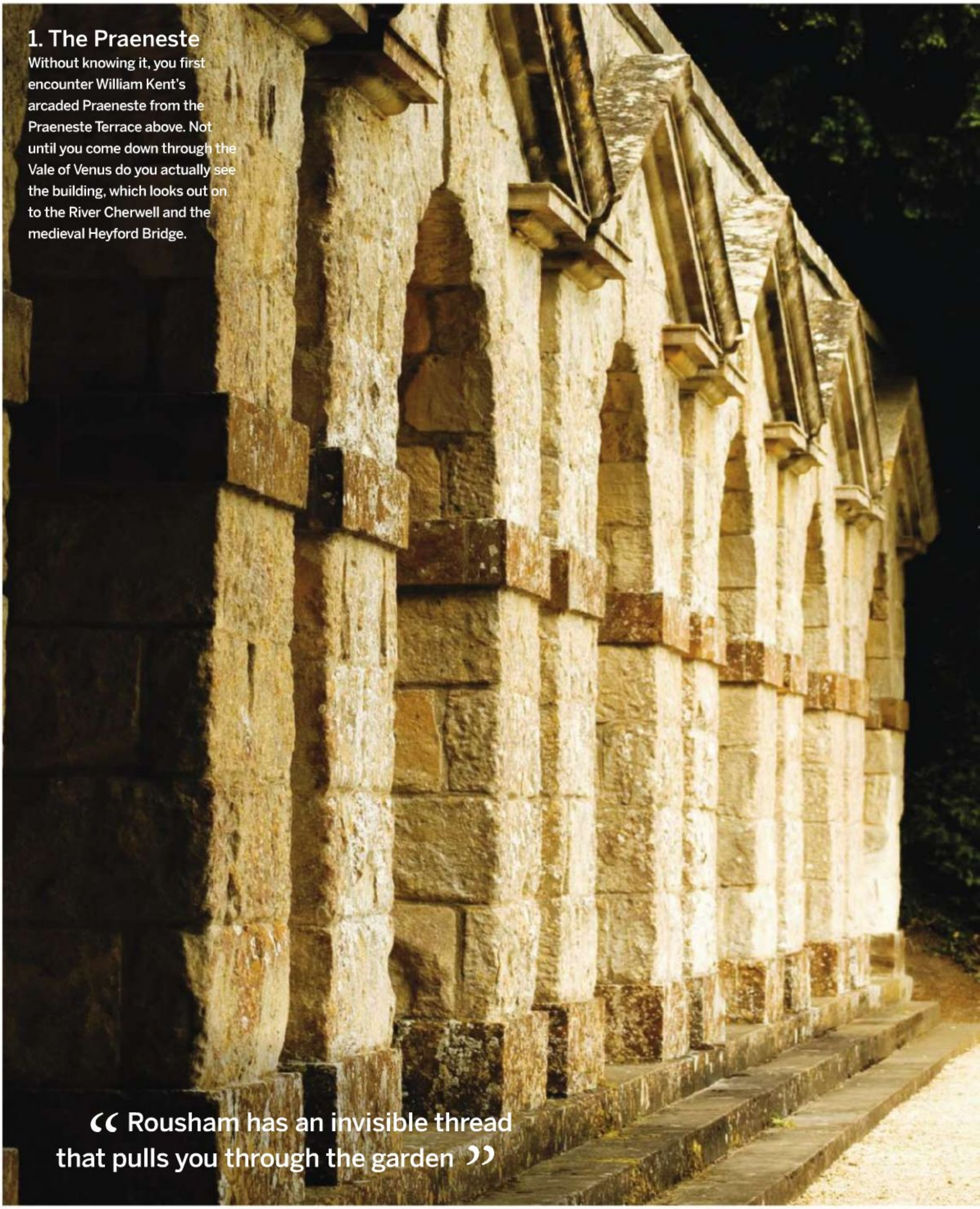
I wanted to start my new series on design with Rousham, because it is a garden I go back to again and again for inspiration in my own work. It is a classic of the early landscape movement, designed by William Kent (1685-1748) in the early 18th century, and proof that the fundamentals of good design don't change.

One of the things I love most about Rousham is the sense of arrival. When you turn into the drive you know already that something is building up. You catch sight of a classical doorway in the boundary wall and spot a rusticated temple on the other side. As you approach, you drive past a field of grazing long-horn cattle, past an unpretentious lodge, and then suddenly the view opens up to an archetypal English country house scene. The ingredients are very simple: the façade of the beautiful Jacobean house and a broad swathe of velvety, striped grass, framed by huge, mature lime trees.

The value of simplicity

Rousham is about simplicity and quality of design. It is a big, grand garden, but every time I visit, I come away with something new that can be re-interpreted in even the smallest of gardens.

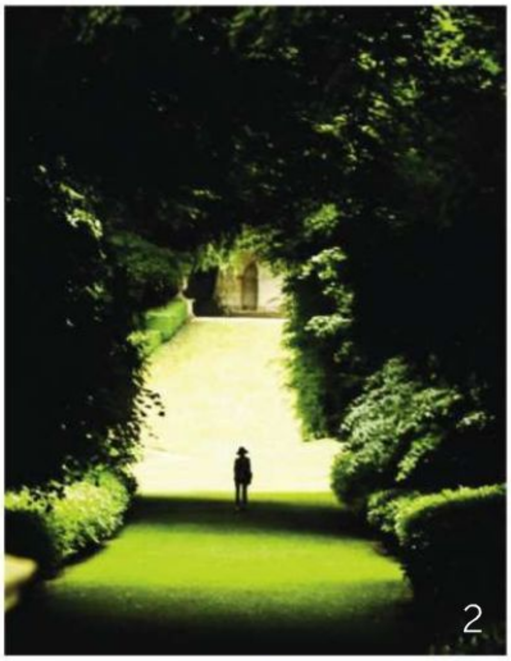
Only a few species of plant have been used to create the impact and this is something I've taken from Rousham – that a limited palette of plants can produce a very powerful effect. Two or three species of trees, or ten varieties of herbaceous plants in a border, can be more effective and elegant than creating too much of a mixture. Rousham is not a flowery garden; there are ▷

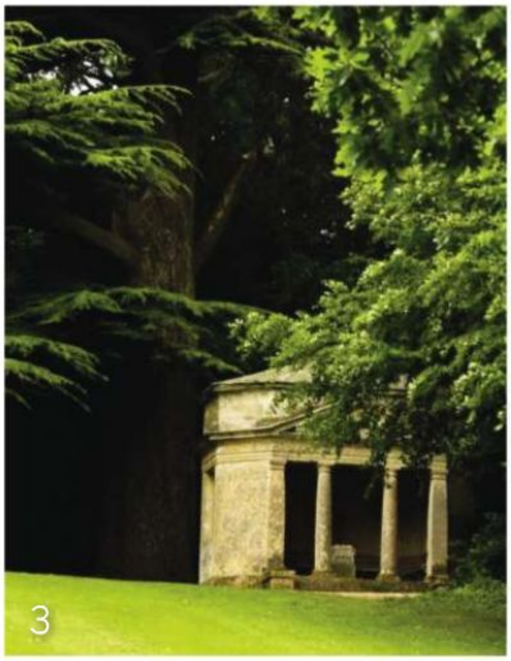


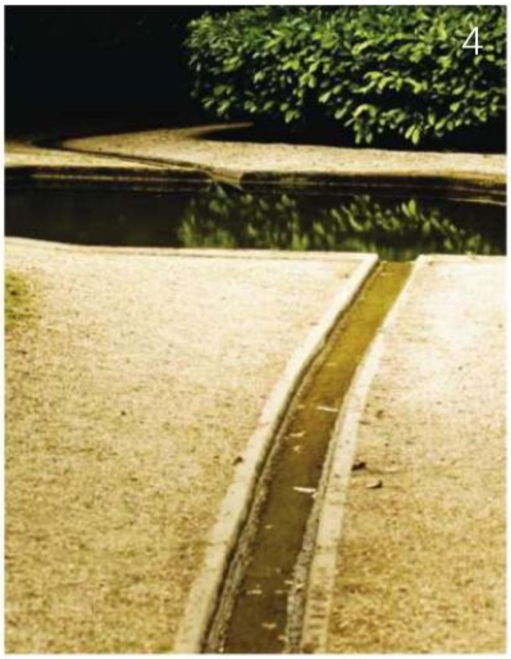
1. The Praeneste

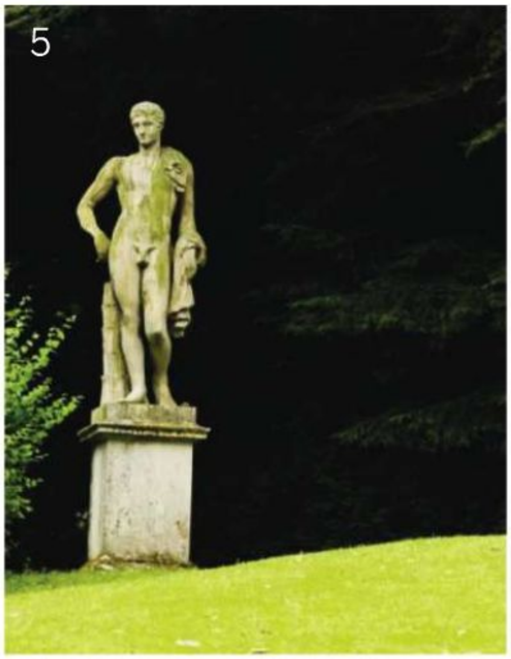
Without knowing it, you first encounter William Kent's arcaded Praeneste from the Praeneste Terrace above. Not until you come down through the Vale of Venus do you actually see the building, which looks out on to the River Cherwell and the medieval Heyford Bridge.

> “ Rousham has an invisible thread that pulls you through the garden ”









2. Light and shadow
At Rousham darkness alternates with light and the natural with the man-made. The effect of travelling down a shadowy green tunnel towards an object in the light is intensified by the simple palette of plants and materials.

3. Temple of Echo
The interior of this beautiful pavilion is limewashed earthy ochre, and there is a charming weather-beaten seat, as well as a remarkable Roman sarcophagus. A garden building can be given this venerable look with layers of old limewash plaster that time will gradually strip away.

4. The Rill and Cold Bath
The point where the serpentine rill meets the octagonal cold bath is bathed in light before continuing its journey between the clipped laurel in the shade of the mature trees. The rill itself is made of naturally cut stone.

5. The statue of Apollo
Like all Rousham's superb sculptural pieces, Apollo is carefully placed to draw you on. He stands at the end of the Long Walk, backed by the darkness of a huge cedar, gazing out of the grounds towards the River Cherwell.

▷ flowers, but they are separate from the rest of the garden. Trees, shrubs and grass compose the structure that's there 365 days of the year and Rousham is a great demonstration of how to use structure in a garden. For instance, there are no signs and yet everybody follows the same route, because Kent uses subtle but simple devices to draw you through the garden.

The garden develops through a series of contrasts: light and shadow, sunshine and shade, cut grass and uncut grass, nature versus the man-made. So in one area you have beautifully mown lawn separated from a long grass meadow by a ha-ha. The contrast is incredibly strong and you can use the idea even in a small cottage garden. Let's say you have a field or an orchard behind your garden. You might put in a simple estate railing that is very transparent, or allow the long field grass to come into your garden by a metre, so you're borrowing the view, holding hands with the landscape.

Grass is important at Rousham; it is the unifying surface throughout but is used in many different ways. Sometimes it's a mown edge to a border, or a simple chamfered (45°) bank around a raised rectangular lawn; long ▷

6. Apple tree

We might wish for an orchard of ancient apple trees, though few of us are fortunate enough to have one. But by imitating the characteristics of these bent old trees it is possible to capture the spirit of great age.

7. Herbaceous border

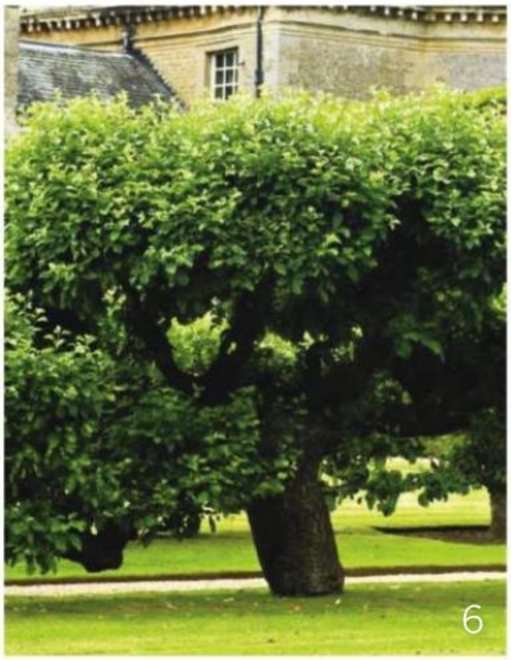
Plants such as blue *Geranium* x *magnificum* spill on to the path, giving the borders a wonderfully soft, relaxed look. Planting directly into paths alongside borders lends a feeling of age and an air of romance.

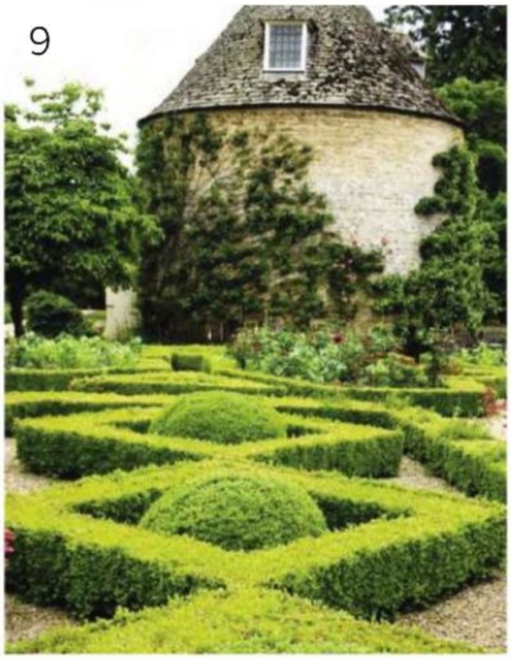
8. Delphiniums

These tall flower spikes mingle with roses and other classics of the English country house border. If you have space, there is nothing more magical than a separate area that comes into its own in high summer.

9. The Parterre and Pigeon House

Formality and abundance together create a sense of well-established order, with trained fruit trees on the walls of the Pigeon House, a fan Morello cherry (left) and an espaliered 'Conference' pear (right). The box parterre is part planted with lady's mantle, valerian, opium poppies and roses.





▷ grass against short grass; a narrow grass path that slows you down as you walk, versus a big wide path that moves you on quickly.

Design-led

Rousham has a *thread* that pulls you through the garden. When you leave the lawn, you are drawn under the trees by the rounded shape of a clipped holly. The clipped curve is like a magnet that seems to pull you towards it, and this understated invitation could be copied in any size garden, by using a drum or cylinder of topiary to act as an entrance.

You are constantly moving from light to shade and back as the garden unfolds in a sequence of wonderful features, from Kent's seven arched Praeneste and the ponds and cascades in Venus' Vale, to the cold bath and serpentine rill. This ribbon of water snakes in and out of the light, an idea that would be wonderful in a garden of any size, for example travelling to deliver water into a dipping pool in a vegetable garden or an orchard. At Rousham, it travels up through dappled light, under overhanging lime trees and through banks of clipped Portuguese laurel. Using laurel in this way is typically 18th-century and it has a lovely

10. Climbing roses

No other climber captures the essence of the English country garden like the rose. Framing an arch in the walled garden, Climbing *Rosa* 'Cécile Brünner', though not a repeat flowerer, reliably produces a profusion of small pink fragrant flowers at the height of summer.

Where to see

Rousham House, Rousham, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX25 4QU.
TEL 01869 347 110
WEBSITE www.rousham.org
OPEN every day from 10am. Last entry 4.30pm.
Tickets £5 per person. No children under 15 or dogs.

Recommended stockists

Trained fruit
Branch Nurseries, The Old England, High Street, Sutton on Trent, Notts NG23 6QA.
Tel (Chris Pike) 07760 308 077., www.branchnurseries.co.uk

Roses
David Austin Roses, Bowling Green Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton WV7 3HB
Tel 01902 376300, www.davidaustinroses.com

Box Hedging
Ready Hedge, Court Gate Nursery, Station Road, Eckington, Worcestershire WR10 3BB. Tel 01386 750585, www.readyhedgeltd.com

purity to it. We have used a similar idea with square or rectangular platforms of beech or box acting as an under-storey for trees. It creates weight in a garden, and makes a formal contrast with the trees growing free and wild above.

A last blaze of colour

Gradually you are led back to the lawn and delivered, through an ancient, knotty yew hedge and a wrought-iron gate, into a hidden walled garden. Now, after all that cool green, there is an amazing sensation of colour. You're in a magical garden with the ghosts of old apple trees and around the edges, a big, blowsy Edwardian-style border. On the mellow brick walls, ancient apple trees are trained, an option for small gardens that haven't room for free-standing fruit trees. Some of the old apple trees in the centre of the garden are so bowed down they almost kiss the ground, and we can emulate this with new trees, by creating a framework to train the branches, so that in time they are drawn down.

Looking, observing, achieving – that's what it's all about. It's a question of saying "I love that look, how do I achieve it?" □

NEXT MONTH Arne Maynard's tips on making entrances – including driveways and parking areas.

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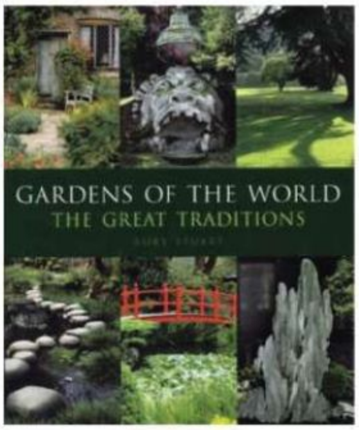
Australian food writer Stephanie Alexander offers her take on growing and cooking fruit and vegetables in her new book *Kitchen Garden Companion*, reviewed on page 96.

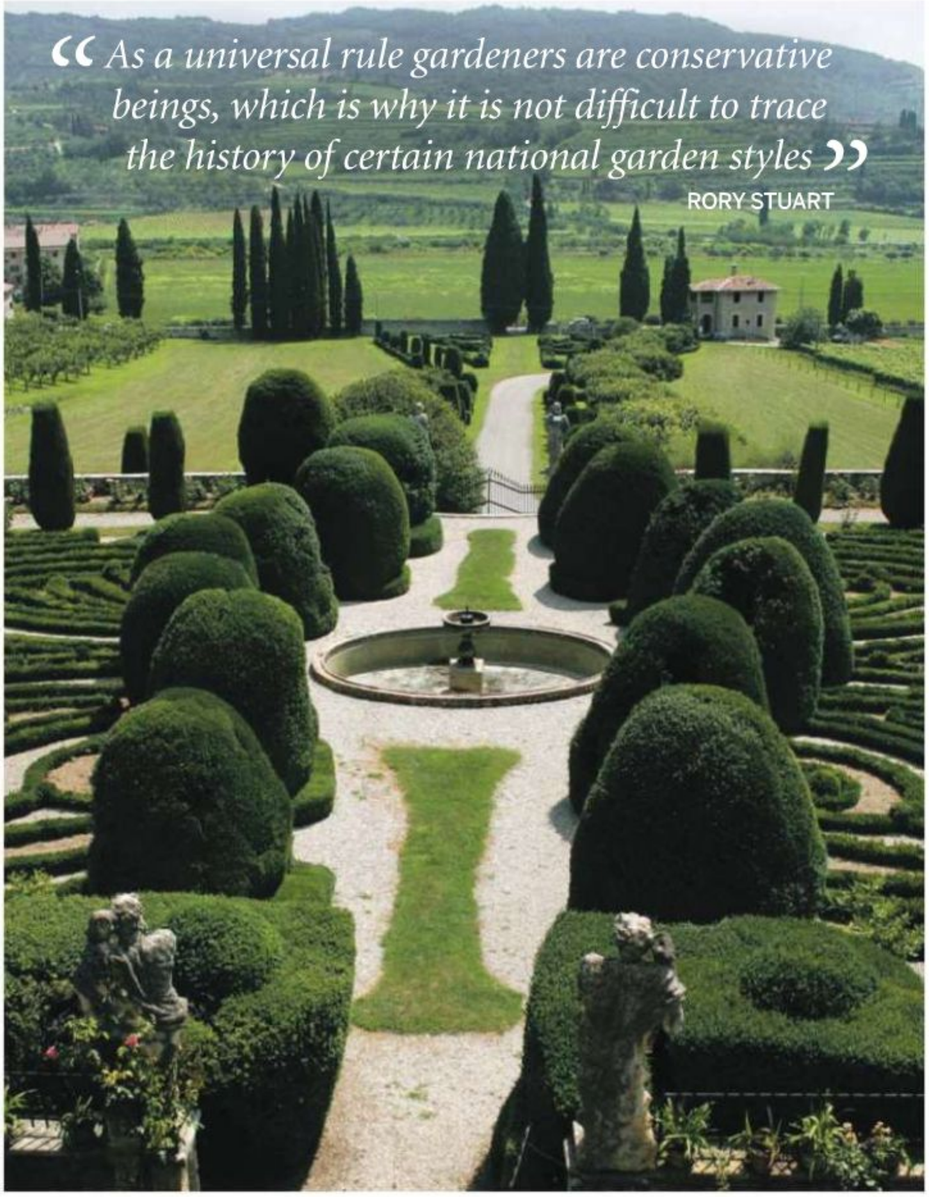
SIMON GRIFFITHS

Book reviews



GARDENS OF THE WORLD: The great traditions

by Rory Stuart Frances Lincoln, £30, ISBN 978-0711231306



> “As a universal rule gardeners are conservative beings, which is why it is not difficult to trace the history of certain national garden styles”
> RORY STUART

RORY STUART

Rory Stuart visited and photographed hundreds of gardens around the world for his new book, including the 17th-century Villa Allegri Arvedi, in Verona, Italy.

When an ambitious book like this aims to convey, by brilliant colour photographs and a perceptively critical text, the essence of all five great garden traditions – Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Italian and English – it inevitably falls back upon generalisations, which can be both true and revealing of national values.

Chinese gardens evolve around an appreciation of the monstrous spirituality in rocks, rooflines, dragons and lion-dogs. In contrast Japanese gardens are refined in their reverence for pure nature: single branches and blossoms, entire lake and forest compositions. Japan itself is a garden to be sensitively manicured, not a home for mad spirits needing respect.

Persian Islamic gardens are obsessed with the water their deserts lack. Impoverished by drought, their austere geometric enclosures of walls and shady arcades compensate for their dryness with delicate architectural patterning. The Court of the Myrtles in Granada is a great and perfect garden yet has no growth beyond a low, straight hedge.

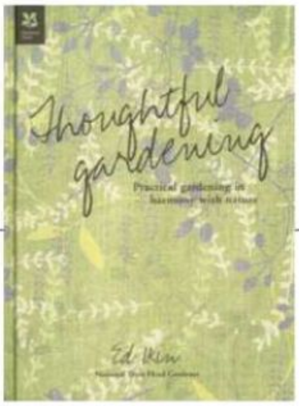
England's Arcadian gardens are a squirearchy's compromise between good hunting country and memories of Italian Grand Tours. Lacking the virtuosity of Italian sculptors, our aristocrats could not copy the Boboli Gardens of Florence, so they adapted Claude Lorrain's modestly templed landscapes. Italy had enough surviving Roman gardens and ruins to allow Britain to recreate Rome at second hand.

One resounding generalisation emerges from this beautiful book: great gardens are not constructs of trees, lakes and hills. They depend upon buildings. Free from the tyranny of functionalism, of housing, feeding and sleeping their owners, garden buildings express the joy of picnics, patriotism, exercise and religion. Every illustration asserts architecture's centrality. Where is Blenheim without Vanbrugh's imperial bridge, or Stourhead without its Pantheon? Out with the rose beds and their green fly! Bring in the temples and the naked gods!

Timothy Mowl is director of the MA in garden history at Bristol University.

book offer

RRP £30. **Reader offer price £28** including p&p. For details on how to order, see page 97



THOUGHTFUL GARDENING: Practical gardening in harmony with nature

by Ed Ikin National Trust, £14.99, ISBN 978-1905400942

This is a curious book. Designed to give the appearance of a well-thumbed notebook, it favours simple drawings over photography.

Refreshingly, this is the work of a head gardener not a journalist. Ed Ikin is responsible for Nymans, the National Trust garden in Sussex, and has the challenge of looking after its historic integrity, presenting it accurately while using sustainable techniques. He's had to find new ways of dealing with problems, such as how to maintain more than 6,500 annual bedding plants in droughts. He combines tried and tested techniques with new, challenging and at times fascinating practices.

Ikin writes from first hand experience. He devotes half the book to soil, manure, watering and pests and diseases, and it is on these subjects that Ikin is most interesting.

Other subjects, though, seem squashed in, or even superfluous. Ultimately, I am unsure whom this book is aimed at. It has the feel and look of a Christmas 'gift', but much of the content is quite advanced. There is lots of interesting stuff in it, but a less cutesy design and a bit of reorganisation would have made a more focussed read.

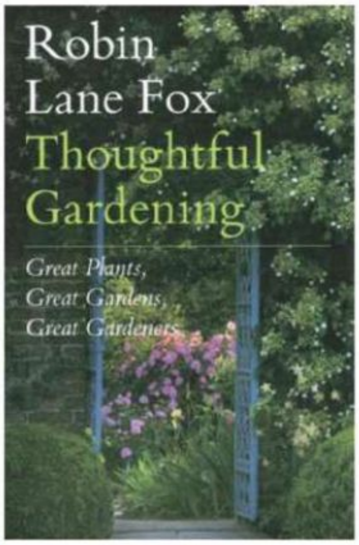
Matthew Wilson is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and lecturer.

book offer

RRP £14.99. **Reader offer price £13.99** including p&p (see page 97).

THOUGHTFUL GARDENING: Great plants, great gardens, great gardeners

by Robin Lane Fox Particular Books/Penguin, £25, ISBN 978-1846142895



Like many people I buy the *Financial Times* on Saturdays, not for the supplement on 'How to Spend It' but for the advice, humour and erudition of its gardening columnist. After 40 years of writing for the *FT* Robin Lane Fox has published a selection of articles, which he has re-edited and enlarged.

Lane Fox's day job is as fellow and tutor in ancient history at New College, Oxford. Stories of his work with students and of life at Oxford are woven through the book. One unsettling shared revelation is that, in 35 years of contact with his students, most of whom will have read Herrick and Milton, none when asked has been able to describe a primrose.

Lane Fox has been the friend (and occasional verbal sparring partner) of many of the gardening personalities of the last 50 years and he describes how each has enriched his gardening and his life. A bossy Nancy Lancaster showed that honeysuckle could be grown as standard trees; Valerie Finnis, a woman with a sometimes difficult personality, is described tenderly relaying details of the garden over a two-way radio to her house-bound husband.

These anecdotes sit cheek by jowl with practical advice, counsel on good plants, and tours of great gardens. All of it fizzing with wit and intelligence. Unusually for an academic, Lane Fox wears his learning lightly. He draws on the work of 11th-century Japanese poets or the writings of Erasmus in a way that is always pertinent and illuminating. He is never a show-off.

The book's thesis is that 'thinking and knowing' enhances our gardens as much as it does our lives, but that studying plants and knowing the craft of gardening and the principles of design is not enough. Gardens are also enhanced by fiction and poetry and art.

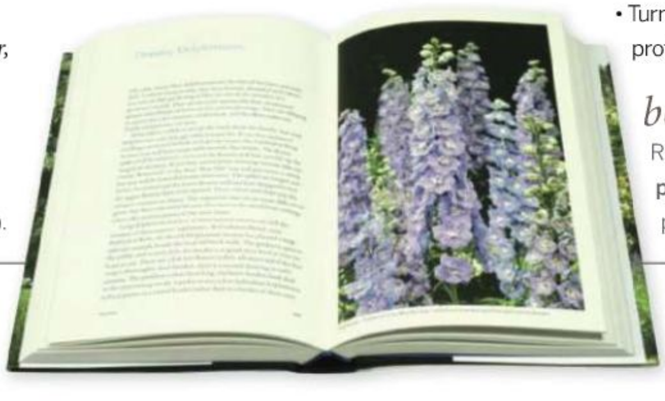
At a time when much garden-writing is reduced to bullet-points and photo captions, Lane Fox is a beacon of thoughtful and informed writing. If you don't know his work, this is the book to start with. Every serious gardener should have a copy on their bookshelf.

John Hoyland is a garden writer who owns Pioneer Plants in Hertfordshire.

- Turn to page 54 for our *Who's who* profile of Robin Lane Fox.

book offer

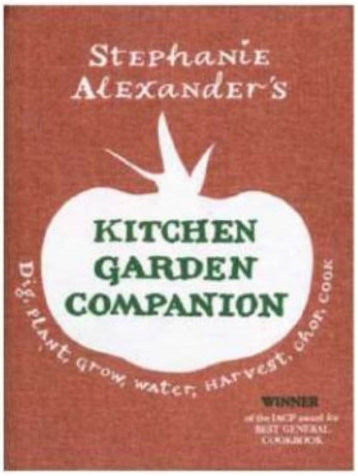
RRP £25. **Reader offer price £22.50** including p&p (see page 97).



Book reviews

KITCHEN GARDEN COMPANION

by Stephanie Alexander Quadrille, £30, ISBN 978-184008780


Stephanie Alexander's
KITCHEN GARDEN COMPANION
Dig, plant, grow, water, harvest, chop, cook
WINNER of the IACP award for BEST GENERAL COOKBOOK

Of all the challenges to growing your own food, using and cooking your produce is rather overlooked. We know that home-grown produce is fresher and tastier than supermarket-bought, but that does not mean that the moment we get our hands on it we will instantly produce delicious meals, and many gardeners end up composting produce that they have put a great deal of effort into producing. Worse still, we cook the stuff and then the children we are doing the whole shebang for turn their noses up at it. Stephanie Alexander's book aims to strengthen the link between garden and kitchen, but her experience in establishing kitchen gardens in Australian primary schools has given her lots of ideas on how to involve children in the harvesting and cooking.

This is primarily a recipe book, but arranged by ingredient. First she tells you fairly briefly how to grow it – and the advice all seems spot on – and then she tells you how to cook it. It's exactly what you need if you are at the mercy of any kind of a glut. So when I have more spinach than I know what to do with, I can turn to the spinach section and choose from spinach burghul, beef and spinach curry and spinach and ricotta pasta roly poly. Almost more helpful than the recipes is the *Preparing and Sharing* paragraphs at the beginning of each section, in which she writes through a load of classic ways in which to use each ingredient (including the simple 'cooked spinach does love butter!'). I can see these little things being of great use.

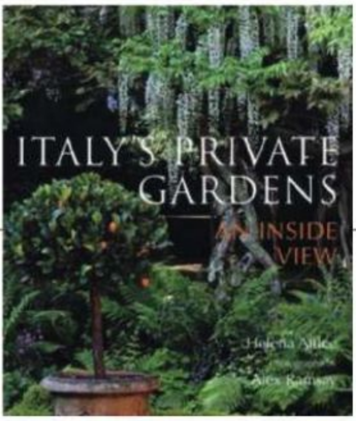
One slight criticism: I would have preferred more space to be devoted to common glut fruits and vegetables, and could have done without the sections on olives and lemons, for instance. I know you *can* grow them yourself, but few gardeners are likely to produce more lemons than they know what to do with. But to be fair, this doesn't set out to be a 'glut handbook', it's just that it would be more handy for *me* if it was.

The book is extremely chunky and of high quality, with two little ribbon bookmarks and big, lovely photographs throughout. I am sure it will help many people to engage with their produce, and to encourage their children to do the same.

Lia Leendertz is a gardening journalist who grows her own vegetables on a Bristol allotment.

book offer

RRP £30. **Reader offer price £28** including p&p.



ITALY'S PRIVATE GARDENS: An inside view

by Helena Attlee, photographs Alex Ramsay Frances Lincoln, £35, ISBN 978-0711229105

For anyone planning a garden visit to Italy this is a precious book. Excellent photographs, ornamental and informative, by Alex Ramsay, illustrate a fine text in which Helena Attlee and Ramsay have collaborated. They describe 59 gardens in all. The descriptions are well done. (The only substantial mistake I noticed gives Sir Harold Acton as the owner of the Villa La Pietra. He, alas, died some time ago and the present owner is New York University, which has been carefully restoring the garden.)

A map showing the distribution of the gardens over the whole country will be useful for those planning a visit. It shows that Tuscany, with 19 notable gardens, is the richest region. But it also shows that there are gardens worth visiting from Lombardy in the north to Calabria in the south.

An introduction gives a good general history of garden-making in Italy. Alas, not all great gardens survive. The authors point out that Andrea Doria's garden overlooking the Bay of Genoa 'Has been replaced by an open-air cinema and a motorway flyover.' Such vandalism is happily rare and what survives in Italy is one of the most magnificent garden collections in the world.

Patrick Taylor is a garden writer.

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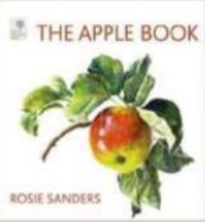
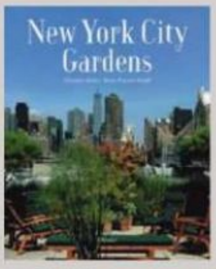
other recently released books for gardeners



THE APPLE BOOK
by Rosie Sanders
Expanded edition of the author's 1988 book, with 400 detailed watercolours of 144 apple varieties.
RHS/Frances Lincoln, £25
ISBN 978-0711231412



NEW YORK CITY GARDENS
by Veronika Hofner & Betsy Pinover Schiff
Eclectic mix of traditional backyards with chic roof gardens and public parks.
Hirmer, £39.95
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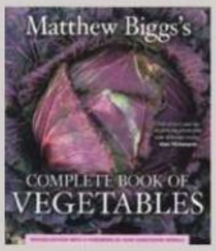

COMPLETE BOOK OF VEGETABLES
by Matthew Biggs
An A-Z of veg, from the familiar to the exotic, with growing tips and recipes. Revised edition.
Kyle Cathie, £16.99
ISBN 978-1856269742

GARDENING PHILOSOPHY FOR EVERYONE
by Dan O'Brien (ed)
Essays on the history and significance of gardening.
Wiley-Blackwell, £11.99
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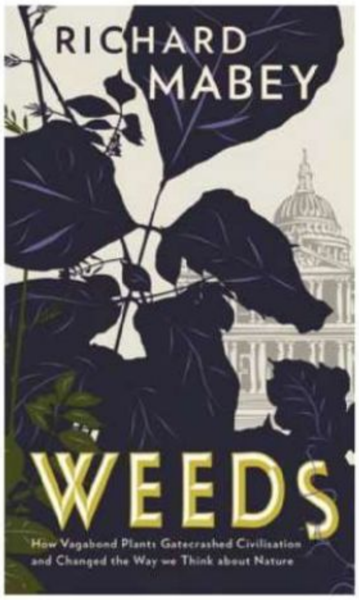
WEEDS: How vagabond plants gatecrashed civilisation and changed the way we think about nature

by Richard Mabey Profile Books, £15, ISBN 978-1846680762


RICHARD MABEY
WEEDS
How Vagabond Plants Gatecrashed Civilisation and Changed the Way we Think about Nature

Weeds, suggests Richard Mabey, are our creation. It is we, not they, who insist on separating plants into wild and domestic. Weeds are the boundary breakers, escaping from our gardens to run riot elsewhere, or else 'gatecrashing' as he puts it, their way into cultivated company where we think they shouldn't be.

Mabey is incapable of writing a tedious sentence and this book strays into as many byways as the seed of rosebay willow herb. The chapter headings – *Thoroughwort*, *Waybread*, *Self-heal* – provide only the most notional signposts to what follows. In his own discursive but completely riveting way, he explores our equivocal attitude to these 'outlaw species', none of which, as he points out, have changed their identities in migrating as weeds. Just their addresses.

In no way is this a piece of propaganda for the suppress-all-non-natives wing of the British conservation movement. Mabey has very little to say about either *Rhododendron ponticum* or water hyacinth and is rather susceptible (as I am) to the beauties of balsam. He's at his best in the most unexpected areas: explaining how weeds arrived (as mattress stuffing, in a taxidermist's bird) and revelling in the urban eco-systems that most of us dismiss as wasteland. His description of an expedition to the refuse tips of east London with the Botanical Society of the British Isles is as mesmerising as any planthunter's account of the jungles of South America. He finds quite a few of the same plants too.

His strength lies in his ability to view his subject not dispassionately, for he writes with magnificent passion, but in a way that removes us, the true interlopers, as the most important characters in the plot (if there is a plot). Throughout this book, ambivalence runs as deep as the roots of ground elder. Are weeds destroyers or repairers? Were the plants that in the wake of the Second World War quickly colonised the bomb sites of British cities part of a healing process? Or did they add insult to injury? We now see that greening as a sympathetic process. The bombed out citizens certainly did not.

As gardeners, our admiration for weeds is rather grudging. They demonstrate too vividly how thin a veneer we've pasted over the earth. Mabey, never dogmatic, is asking us to give them what they deserve. Respect.

Anna Pavord is a garden writer and newspaper columnist.

- *Weeds* is published on 14 October.

book offer

RRP £15. **Reader offer price £13.50** including p&p.

15 ways to become a low impact gardener

With a little planning gardeners can reduce their carbon footprint

WORDS **BOB FLOWERDEW**

1 **Your soil is one of the most important resources of your garden.** Feed regularly with compost to keep your plants healthy and insect life thriving. Rather than buying bags of fertilisers, make your own compost using suitable food, garden waste and leaf mould, or get a wormery.

LIZ EDDISON / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

BBC Bob Flowerdew is a regular panellist on Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*, which visits the 'low-impact' Hulme Community Gardens in Manchester on Friday, 15 October (repeated Sunday, 17 October at 2pm).

2 **Check the credentials of any hard materials that you bring into the garden.** Wooden furniture or fencing should come from sources approved by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), and stonework from ethically run companies. Some companies import stone from overseas quarries that use child labour – and then there's the carbon cost of shipping it over here. The ideal is to use locally sourced, sustainable materials. Besides, from a design point of view, these are invariably more in keeping with the vernacular look of a property or area.

3

GRAHAM STRONG / GAP PHOTOS

3 Recycling shouldn't just extend to water and compost. Many of the hard materials in your garden can be used again – bricks, posts, wires and paving can all be put to alternative uses without compromising on aesthetics. Be creative in how you re-use worn-out household items (see picture, above).

4 **Be prepared for gluts** and think of ways of preserving any excess crops now to enjoy in leaner months. Bottling, canning, dehydrating and preserving are all time-honoured methods. There are plenty of courses and books available.

4

MICHAEL KING / GAP PHOTOS

5 **Water is a key resource.** Ensure a good system of rain harvesting. Add guttering to sheds, as well as your home, and store rainwater in butts or other containers. You might also consider siphoning 'grey water' from household washing.

6 **Companion planting can help reduce the need for pesticides.** Certain plants attract pests away from precious crops or act as host species for beneficial insects. Flowers from the daisy family, for example, attract hoverflies, whose larvae then feed on aphids.

7 **Plant green manures, such as clover, between vegetable crops.** Pests will be confused as to which plant to settle on. At the end of the season, green manures can be dug into the ground to enrich the soil.

8 **Buy your plants locally,** from nurseries that raise them locally. Learn how to propagate or set up local plant and seed swaps.

9

ANDREW PARKINSON / LONELYPLANETIMAGES.COM

13

JERRY HARPUR / GAP PHOTOS

9 **One of the best ways to control pests is to encourage natural predators.** Install a 'bug hotel'; plant tempting, nectar-rich flowers; include a pile of logs as a home to beetles and bugs, which in turn encourages birds. Leave a pocket of the garden to grow 'wild' and consider including a pond or water marginal area.

10 **Know the life cycle of the most common pest in your garden.** Then it's easier to act at the right time. Barriers, meshes and traps work well if used correctly.

11 **Foraging** for seasonal food is a fantastic way of supplementing your diet.

12 **Grow your own vegetables and fruit** – or buy locally grown where possible to reduce the environmental costs of transporting foodstuffs. Don't forget to consider community options such as shared allotments, box schemes and swaps.

13 **Green roofs offer many low-impact benefits to urban areas** – they support biodiversity, improve air quality, help keep buildings warm in winter and cool in summer, and you could even grow veg up there.

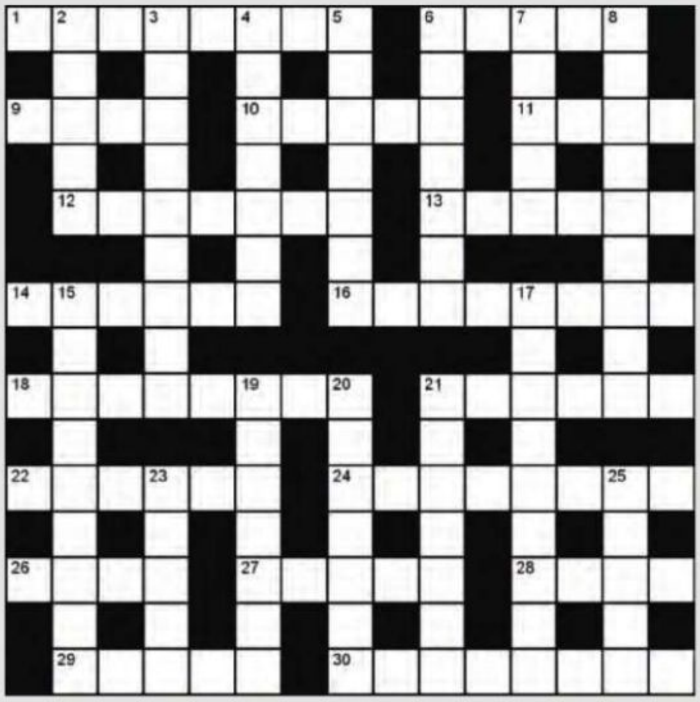
14 **Plant trees** – they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and create habitats for wildlife. Consider a 'forest garden' in which trees provide a crop of fruit or nuts, or for coppicing.

15 **Be inclusive** – low-impact, organic gardening is the perfect way to teach children about wildlife and healthy, fresh food. Get them involved and you'll nurture their sense of wellbeing, too.□

USEFUL LINKS

- For information about low-carbon options, see the Centre for Alternative Technology, www.cat.org.uk
- Read more about sustainable living at The Permaculture Association, www.permaculture.org.uk
- Find out about traditional techniques and self-sufficiency from the Low-Impact Living Initiative, www.lowimpact.org

Crossword



ACROSS

1 Genus of mallow family: our Nurseryman's Favourite is x *milleri* (8)

6 Ancient object – found in laurel I clipped (5)

9 Grassy area – handkerchief-sized? (4)

10 Tried changing flagging (5)

11 East European supporter of eg beans (4)

12 Choked with weeds (4-3)

13 Sweet-sounding name of Guernsey gardens hosting October's Festival of 5 down. (6)

14 Ornamental garden in Windsor's Royal Landscape – unusual villas (6)

16 Container for embryonic plants – ready set out (4,4)

18 A potato: like King Edward? (8)

21 Acid-tasting herb – in spices or relishes (6)

22 Rings of leaves or flowers around a stem (6)

24 Vésian's 'La Louve' garden is in this region of France – odd pen cover (8)

26 Garden pest is a heavy blow! (4)

27 Upright ... top of cone in tree, perhaps (5)

28 It's a tree shoot – understand? (4)

29 Stops flower stalks (5)

30 Another genus of the mallow family – makes Alice sad (8)

DOWN

2 Name of eg a *Euonymus japonicus* cultivar – well done! (5)

3 Sort of Argentine citrus fruit (9)

4 Like growth of side shoots – partly lanceolate, Ralph (7)

5 Plants profiled by Carol Klein, of which 'Harlequin' is our nurseryman's favourite (7)

6 Rootlet that's fundamental, we hear (7)

7 Plant of legume family with tall flower spikes (5)

8 Produce a plant variety from a naturally occurring species (9)

15 Perennial with white everlasting flowers – has liana twisted around top of plant (9)

17 A four-petalled potentilla – 7/9ths pain and suffering! (9)

19 eg catkins of *Hamamelis* (7)

20 Such a conifer, kept flat-topped, is a hallmark of Vésian's gardening style (7)

21 As a toad lily's petals are espied? (7)

23 A plant that's turned out different from the rest of the crop (5)

25 Herb of the onion genus – briefly cold by bee colony (5)

SOLUTIONS WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SEPTEMBER'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS **1** Leaf; **4** Campanulas; **9** *Eryngium*; **10** Garden; **11** Grit; **12** Oasis; **13** Pear; **14** Cally; **15** Slabbed; **17** *Anthemis*; **20** Asters; **21** Wasp; **23** Lords; **24** Nuts; **26** Onions; **27** Pine cone; **28** *Brugmansia*; **29** Loam.

DOWN **2** Error; **3** Fine tilth; **4** Chicory; **5** Mimosas; **6** Augusta; **7** U-trap; **8** Alexander; **14** Container; **16** Botanical; **18** Melissa; **19** Stripes; **20** *Amsonia*; **22** Prong; **25** Tania.

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SEPTEMBER 2010
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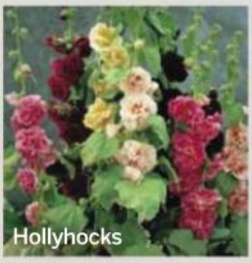
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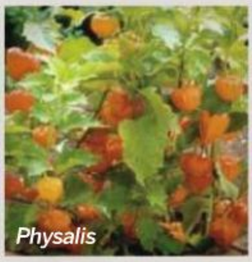
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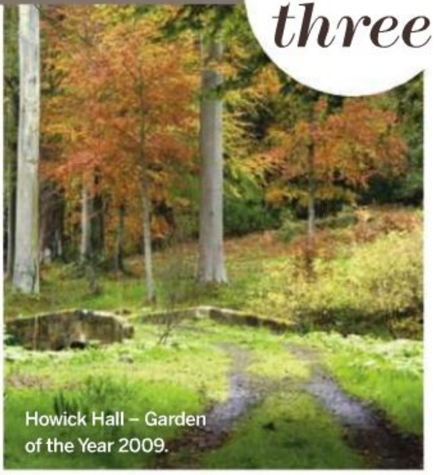
Garden of the Year at the Garden Museum *Offer three*



Howick Hall – Garden of the Year 2009.

Each year the Garden Museum invites some of the top names in gardening to select the garden that they feel sums up the spirit of gardening for that year. We will shortly hear the winner for 2010 but just before we do, the Garden Museum looks back to the winner for 2009 – Howick Hall in Northumberland, as nominated by designer Tom Stuart-Smith. On 20 October Lord Howick talks about the garden and the arboretum he has created, which includes more than 11,000 trees, many grown from seed collected on his travel around the world.

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can take advantage of a special offer for tickets at £10 (usually £20). Please phone to book on 020 7401 7765 quoting 'GARDENS ILLUSTRATED' to gain your discount.

- Garden of the Year 2009: Howick Hall takes place at 6.30pm (for a 7pm start) on 20 October, at the Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SW1 7LB. For full details see www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

RICHARD POYER

Autumn *colour*

Enjoy the Autumn colours by exploring this selection of beautiful woodlands and gardens.

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum in Gloucestershire, is internationally renowned for the fiery autumnal colour of its trees. Home to the UK's National Collection of Japanese maples, Westonbirt's trees become a must-see attraction during autumn for their vibrant displays of yellow, orange and red leaves. Follow weekly autumn colour updates from 1 October on www.fowa.org.uk. Westonbirt, The National Arboretum, Glos. GL8 8QS Tel: 01666 880220 | www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt.

Barnsdale is a joy to visit at any time of year. Come and stroll through 38 amazing gardens that are full of stunning autumn colour, with late blooming flowers and flame-coloured foliage. Or visit in the winter to really appreciate the intricacies of each individually designed garden. Full of beauty, scent and great gardening ideas, Barnsdale is a wonderful day out, and open daily all year round. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH | Tel: 01572 813200 | www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk.

Listed among the top 10 places to see autumn leaves by Enjoy England, Exbury is world-famous for its rhododendrons, azaleas and the National Collection of *Nyssa* and *Oxydendrum*, two of the most colourful autumn trees. Explore 200 acres of woodland gardens with a special trail, then be dazzled by spectacular *Nerine sarniensis* in the Five Arrows Gallery. Exbury Gardens and Steam Railway, The New Forest, Hampshire SO45 1AZ | Tel: 023 8089 1203 | www.exbury.co.uk.

Graham Hutton

Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens are Grade-I listed gardens, which boast collections of exotic plants and trees from all over the world. Many of these were first introductions to this country. Do not miss the enchanted floodlighting of the gardens on 13–31 October. There is a superb colonial restaurant for coffee, lunches & teas and a specialist plant nursery. Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Dorset DT3 4LA | Tel: 01305 871387 www.abbotsburygardens.co.uk.

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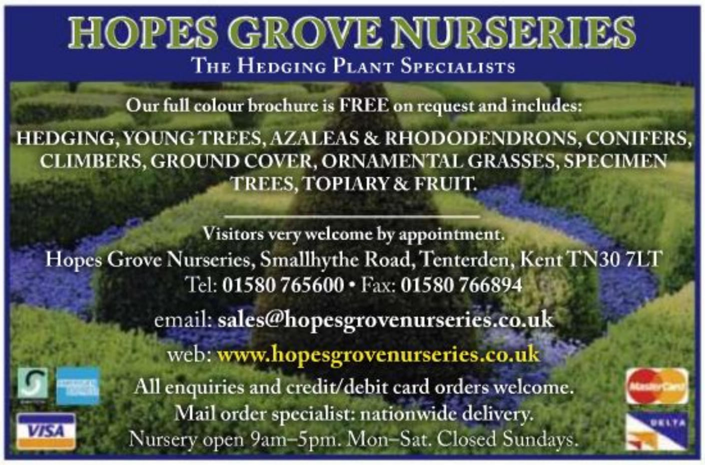

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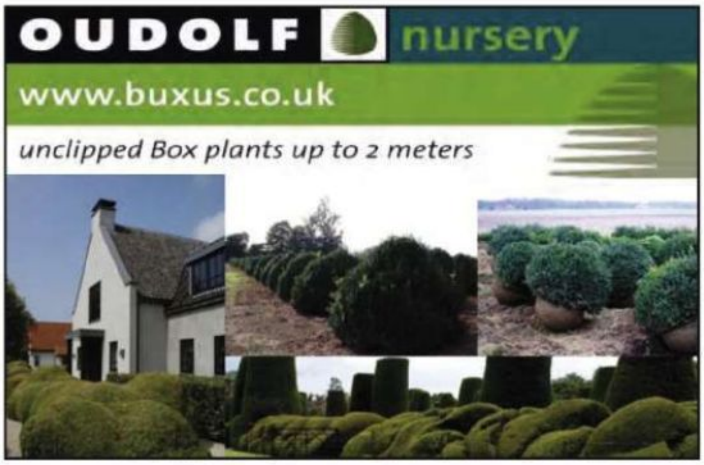

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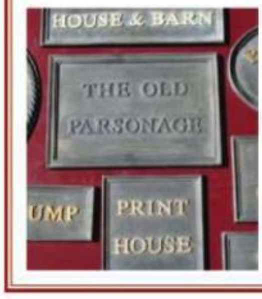

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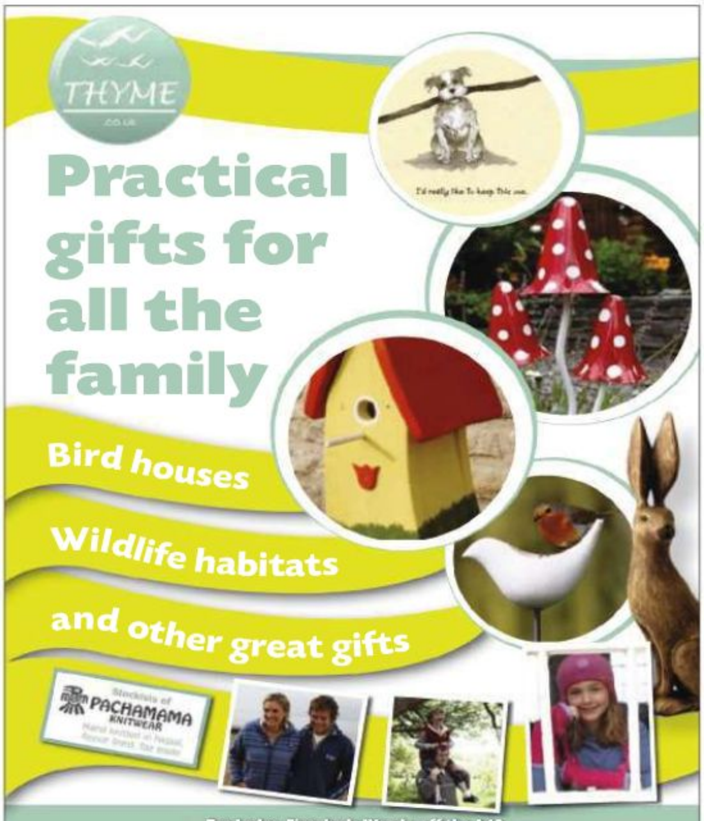

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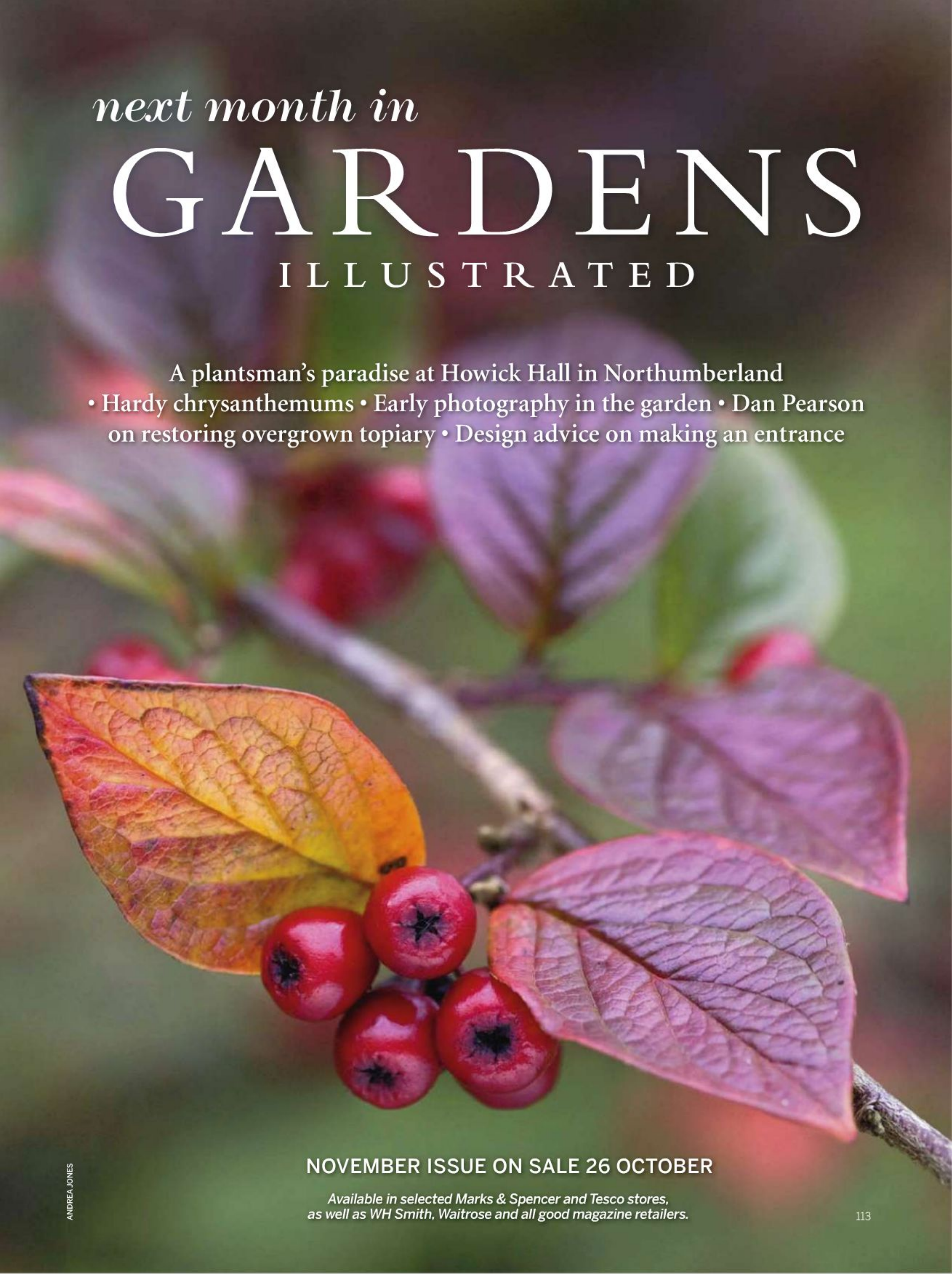

next month in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

A plantsman's paradise at Howick Hall in Northumberland • Hardy chrysanthemums • Early photography in the garden • Dan Pearson on restoring overgrown topiary • Design advice on making an entrance

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ANDREA JONES

A final flourish

The rich colours of autumn are a last flamboyant gesture before winter inevitably grips our gardens

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **MARK HEARLD**

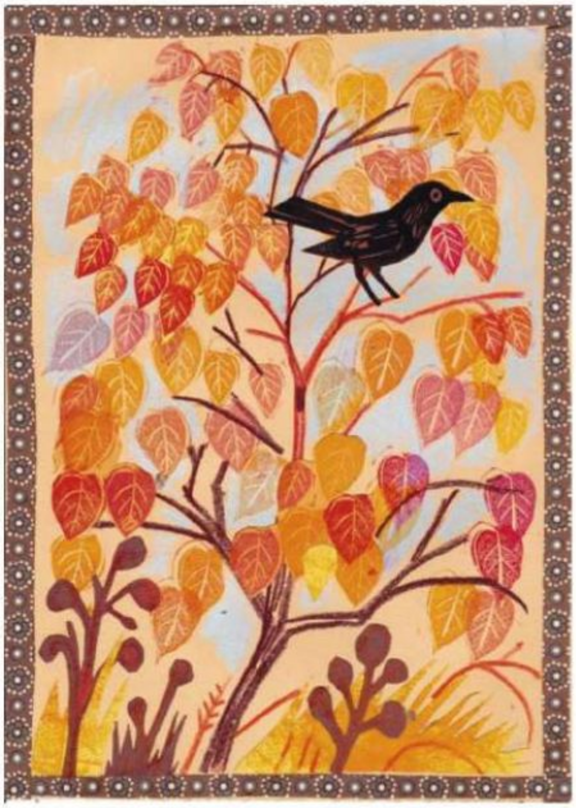
Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

While spring is a nebulous thing, never certain until long after the completion, autumn has a much steadier progress. A cold snap can send spring into reverse for a time, but autumn knows no remission. The bright days of October illuminate the work of lengthening nights. When autumn colour, the great mask of decay, comes flooding across the landscape, we applaud, as you would applaud the old lady who comes to the party in scarlet pyjamas and a yellow hat because, when you are past all else you might as well be exuberant. If there is colour that can be seen from a great distance, why look closely at the blemishes?

There are complex reasons why colour varies depending on species, climate and weather, but for most of our leaves the transformation is a basic process of revelation: as chlorophyll departs, colours that were there all along become visible. The more flamboyant plants, the rich reds and purples, weave their colours from new chemicals produced in late summer and dependent on a mixture of sugars and light, which is why this confection is more successful in some parts of the world than others. It is the dullness of our late summers, as well as the limited variety of our native species, that mutes our display.

Not that we should let global consciousness spoil our enjoyment. It would be terrible if photographs of New England made us dismissive of old England in all her understated glory. Though I admit a predilection for going to Scotland in October, when the highlands are ablaze with bracken and deergrass, and rivulets of buttered birches drip into the glens. I remember also an autumn I spent in Northumberland, 30 years ago, when there were so many butter-yellow leaves that the light itself seemed to turn gold. I don't know how scientific this advice is, but it seems that if you want to be a leaf-peeper you should head north.

You will find lists, at the backs of gardening books, of trees that can be planted with autumn colour in mind. To me that seems a strange way of doing things. How many hundreds of acres would you need to have before you could devote space to a gaudy ritual that puts an end to your gardening year? Or does your *Parrotia* stand, like a skull on a philosopher's desk, to remind you all the days of living that this too will pass (and quite probably end in disappointment)? Autumn colour could never be a prime motive for me. It must always be a bonus; a small favour done by a plant in well-earned retirement.



> *"When autumn colour, the great mask of decay, comes flooding across the landscape, we applaud"*

Having said that I, immediately and in self-contradiction, think of *Cercidiphyllum*, and if I had hundreds of acres I would plant a hundred of that alone and walk among them every day for the whole of October. The scent that the leaves give off in dotage is the main point of this tree. It is indescribable: some would say burnt sugar, but that is trite; if amber had a smell, that would be it. The colours too are at once rich and subtle and complex, with pink in the red and bronze in the yellow. But the colours of this tree have been good all season, most interesting perhaps when the leaves are new, and the charming way that the foliage hangs is pure decoration.

Vitis coignetiae, the decorative sibling of the grapevine, varies in autumn colour depending on the clone. You may trust your nursery absolutely, or you might make your purchase now when you can see what you are getting (only to discover in subsequent years that the amazing hues in the nursery row were stress colours). My friend Mat recently discovered that cutting his hard back in spring produced outsize leaves, which has made me think of putting one on a pole in the border as an alternative to a stooled *Paulownia*. That over a skirt of yellowed hostas would finish the year with a bang. ☐

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